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# SPEECHES

BY

BABU SURENDRANATH BANERJEA,

*With a half-tone picture of the Speaker.*

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VOL. VI.

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CALCUTTA

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## A SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF BABU SURENDRANATH BANERJEA.

IN the history of nations, as in agriculture, there are periods of fertility producing quite a crop of great men as well as times of sterility unrelieved by the appearance of a single man of genius. The forties of the nineteenth century were one such period of fertility. It was this decade that gave to our country, as we have seen, Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee, Mr. Monmohan Ghose and his illustrious brother. It was this decade again that witnessed the birth of one of the greatest sons of India, who has set apart his life to the service of his country and who may truly be entitled to the most honourable title of the old Roman Orator, "the father of his country."

Born in 1848, Surendranath was junior to Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee by four years, and like him came of a respectable Brahman family at Taltala in Calcutta. His father was the famous Dr. Durgacharan Banerjea whose medical skill has passed into a by-word in Bengal. Educated at the Doveton College, Surendranath graduated at the Calcutta University and started for England in 1868 to try for the Indian Civil Service, in company with two other youngmen, each of whom is an honoured name in our country and one of whom has specially shed upon it a lustre for scholarship and patriotism.

While in England Surendranath had the opportunity of studying under men like Prof. Goldstucker and Samuel Morley. In due time he came out successful at the Civil Service Examination, but the Commissioners refused to take him into service on the plea of his having passed the age limit. Surendranath was divine to the necessity of making a law court matter of it and then the Commissioners gave up their contention by enrolling him as a member of the

service. On his return to India, Surendranath served for two years as an Assistant-Magistrate at Sylhet, but he soon had to resign the Service on account of some slight charges brought against him by Government. There at once arose a storm of indignation all over the country and meetings were held and articles were written in support of Surendranath and accusing Government of gross injustice. But all was of no avail. Surendranath had to go. But out of evil cometh good and Surendranath lost to the Civil Service became Surendra won for and dedicated to the Service of his Country.

Ever since that time Surendranath has devoted himself heart and soul to his country's cause. For a short time he worked as a Professor of English Literature in the Metropolitan Institution of the ever-memorable Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar. In 1882 Surendranath started a school of his own in Calcutta, which gradually grew into the Ripon College—one of the best conducted private Colleges in the metropolis, and in 1878 he undertook the Editorship of the *Bengalee*. In its columns in 1883, he attacked Mr. Justice Norris for having wounded the feelings of the Hindus, by ordering, in a certain case, the family idol to be brought into open court. It was followed by an arrest for contempt of court and although an apology was offered, he was sentenced to be put into civil jail for two months. He had already established his renown for matchless oratory and the outburst of feeling which took place throughout the country on his imprisonment has never been witnessed. The whole country went mad over it and the incident only brought Surendranath and his country into closer relationship than ever.

Among the leaders of the Indian National Congress Surendranath stands foremost and it is to his personality that the movement owes its share of success. He twice adorned the chair of its President and on both of these occasions his utterances were unique. In the Legislative Council and

on the Municipal Board, the talents and energy of dranath were all employed in the service of his country. During the Calcutta Municipal Bill agitation he worked with the ardour and zeal of a youngman and to-day as we pass along the current of *Swadeshism*, we feel everywhere the influence of the same personality all through its course.

Old as he is, he is still as active as any youngman and the fire of enthusiasm and robust optimism with which he is endowed, carry everything before him. The tenacity of purpose which characterises him made a distinguished journalist once change his name into "Surrender not," and the marvellous powers of well-reasoned oratory, with which nature has endowed him, has caused him to be compared with Cicero and Demosthenes. May he live long to work for the cause of his country to which he has devoted his life and to whose service he has dedicated his all.—*Bengal Celebrities.*





# CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
ELECTION RULES AT THE KRISHNAGAR CONFERENCE ...	1
SIR COMER PETHERAM MEETING ... ..	7
AT THE MUNICIPAL MEETING IN CONNEXION WITH H. H. THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR'S SPEECH AT ENTALLY ...	12
FAMINE QUESTION AT THE NATIONAL CONGRESS, 1896 ...	24
REPLY TO MR. JACOB'S STATEMENT ... ..	35
AMRAOTI CONGRESS, 1897... ..	57
ON THE SEDITION BILL AT THE TOWN HALL, CALCUTTA ...	72
ON THE CALCUTTA MUNICIPAL BILL ... ..	81
DACCA CONFERENCE.—ON PLAGUE MEASURES ... ..	125
MADRAS CONGRESS, 1898. WELCOME TO LORD CURZON ...	136
CONSTITUTION AND WORKING OF THE CONGRESS ...	148
LUCKNOW CONGRESS, 1899. CALCUTTA MUNICIPAL ACT ...	154
APPOINTMENT OF AN ENGLISH AGENCY ... ..	170
PRESENTATION OF AN ADDRESS TO MR. R. C. DUTT ...	173
OPENING CEREMONY OF THE BRADLAUGH HALL AT LAHORE... 177	
LAHORE CONGRESS, 1900. EMPLOYMENT OF INDIANS IN MINOR CIVIL SERVICES... ..	180
CONGRESS AND LORD CURZON. THANKS TO H. E. THE VICEROY ... ..	190
DEATH OF THE QUEEN. DEMONSTRATION BY THE PEOPLE, ...	204
CALCUTTA CONGRESS, 1901. WIDER EMPLOYMENT OF NATIVES OF INDIA ... ..	207
AHMEDABAD CONGRESS, ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT ...	224
ON SOCIAL REFORM, 1902 ... ..	316
ANSWER TO THE STUDENTS' ADDRESS ... ..	319
TO THE STUDENTS OF BERHAMPUR ... ..	324
MADRAS CONGRESS, 1903 ... ..	330
—ON THE UNIVERSITIES BILL ... ..	332
BENGAL PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE, <i>July</i> 1904 ... ..	345
TOWN HALL MEETING. IN CONNEXION WITH THE SCIENTIFIC, AND INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION IN BENGAL ... ..	357
RAMMOHAN ROY ANNIVERSARY ... ..	357

# CONTENTS. \*

BOMBAY CONGRESS, 1904. INDIANS AND THE PUBLIC SERVICE.	366
MAHARSHI DAVENDRANATH TAGORE MEMORIAL MEETING ...	379
THE STUDENTS' UNION ' ... ..	384
PARTITION OF BENGAL :—PROTEST MEETING AT BHOWANIPUR	386
SWADESHI MOVEMENT. MEETING AT COLUTOLA ...	389
—MEETING AT KUMARTULI ... ..	392
CONGRESS AT BENARES, 1905 ... ..	393
—THE PARTITION OF BENGAL ... ..	396
PRIZE-DISTRIBUTION MEETING... ..	406
INAUGURAL ADDRESS TO ENTRANCE CANDIDATES ...	411
IN MEMORY OF BABU JOGENDRA CHANDRA BOSE ...	416
SWADESHISM, DEC. 1906 ... ..	419
CALCUTTA CONGRESS, 1906 ... ..	430
CALCUTTA MUNICIPAL BILL, PART I, ... ..	442
“ “ „ PART II, ... ..	447

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BABU SURENDRANATH BANERJEA'S SPEECH  
ON THE ELECTION RULES AT THE  
KRISHNAGUR CONFERENCE.

Mr. President and Gentlemen,

BEFORE I proceed to deal with the Resolution which has been entrusted to me, I desire to refer to some observations which have been made by two of the preceeding speakers, in regard to the place which was assigned in the list of our business to the Resolution dealing with the despatch of the Indian contingent to Egypt. They complain that being an imperial question and this being a Provincial Conference, the first place should not have been accorded to this Resolution. I desire to point out that the order of the Resolutions is no index on the part of the Conference of the comparative importance of the different Resolutions in our programme. The order is merely a matter of arrangement, determined with reference to convenience in the despatch of our business ; and no more striking evidence in support of what I say can we have than this — that the Resolution which I am about to move though the last in the series is not inferior in point of importance to any of the Resolutions which have been laid before the Conference. With this explanation which I trust will satisfy my friends who have raised the question, I pass on to the consideration of the Resolution which I have the honor to move. The terms of the Resolution are these : (Here reads the Resolution.)

You are aware that one of the reforms upon which the Congress had set its heart, which it insisted in season and out of season, was this reform of the Councils. When the Congress met for the first time in 1885 it put this question in the forefront and formulated the lines upon which, in its opinion, the reform should be carried out. It repeated the

demand at every meeting of the Congress and continued the agitation both here and in England, until its efforts were crowned with success, and the Councils were reformed and enlarged by the Indian Councils Act of 1892. That indeed was a halting measure of reform which did not satisfy the country. We accepted it only as the partial instalment of a great concession which will be made to us in the fullness of time. The amending statute did not recognize the elective principle. Discretion in this respect was given to the Government of India, and the discussion which preceded the enactment of the statute left no doubt as to how that discretion was to be used. Both Lord Salisbury and Mr. Gladstone from their places in Parliament declared that what was intended by the Act was to secure a living representation of the Indian peoples. How far that object has been attained will appear from one or two facts which with your permission I will lay before the Conference. You have in Bengal a population of seventy millions. This vast population is represented by six elected members, or if you take the whole Council, consisting of elected and non-elected members, by 20 members. Why, the pettiest Municipality in the Province has a more adequate representation than that. The representation in our municipalities varies from twenty to thirty members of whom fully two-thirds are elected.

Defective as the Act is, the manner of its working in Bengal has rendered it still more unsatisfactory. That it should be so need not excite our surprise, having regard to the genesis of the rules under which the Act is worked. These rules were issued by the Government of Sir Charles Elliott which is saying a great deal. They were settled at a Conference of officials held at Belvedere, to which not a single non-official was invited. As for the rules themselves they are open to the obvious objection that under a system of rotation, whole divisions are left unrepresented in the Council. You know what the system of rotation is. In 1893, when the first elections were held, the Presidency, the

Rajshahi, the Patna and the Chittagong Divisions took part in the elections. All the others, including such important Divisions, as the Dacca and the Burdwan Divisions, were left out. In the elections of 1895, the Divisions which had taken part in the elections of 1893 were left out—the Divisions which had been left out in 1893, took part in the elections. Thus at each election, four divisions take part, the others remain unrepresented. Ours is thus a partial representation. It need not be so. In Madras and the North-Western Provinces a different system prevails. The municipalities and the District Boards are grouped into four divisions. Thus in Madras, we have the municipalities of the northern and those of the southern division, each group returning a member to the Legislative Council at each election. The District Boards are similarly classified into two divisions. All the District Boards and Municipalities thus take part at each election. None are excluded. All are represented. The representation is not, like ours, partial and incomplete. Not the smallest inconvenience has ever arisen from this arrangement. There never has been any complaint of any kind. There never has been a tie, while thorough representation has been secured so far as practicable under the existing rules. The only possible objection to the adoption of the system which prevails in Madras and North-Western Provinces (which my friend Babu Ambika Charan Mazumdar reminds me is also the system followed in Bombay) is, what was so temperately put forward by the *Statesman* newspaper, that it offers less scope for the play of local interest. This however is an inconvenience which the Governments of Madras and of the North-Western Provinces have not felt. And if it is ever felt, it can be easily removed. All that the Government has got to do is to appoint a person possessed of local knowledge for any Bill which may require such knowledge. The Government has almost a free hand in the matter of appointing members of Council. Out of twenty members of the Bengal Council, only six are elected, fourteen are nominated. The

Government therefore can have no practical difficulty in providing for local knowledge when the consideration in Council of any proposed measure of law may need it.

The Government is now re-considering the rules for the election of members to the local Legislative Council, not indeed with a view to satisfy the demands of public opinion, but to remove a serious administrative difficulty. The District Board elections for the Dacca Division and the Bhagulpur Division threatened to end in a *fiasco*. There was a tie in connection with both the elections. The tie in regard to the election by the District Boards of the Dacca Division was got over by the public-spirited withdrawal of Raja Surja Kanta Acharyya Chowdhury from the field which had the effect of securing the return of our distinguished President to the Council. [Babu Matilal Ghose :—“ You should have also mentioned Babu Ambika Charan Mozumder's firmness in the matter.” The speaker ;—I did not mention Babu Ambika Charn Mozumdar's name for personal reasons.”] At Bhagulpur however the situation became critical. The rival candidates stuck fast to their guns. Neither of them would withdraw. The Government came to the rescue. It cut the Gordian knot by appointing the Maharaja of Gidhour to represent the Bhagulpore Division in the Council, although he did not even stand as a candidate for election. That was a grave scandal. It was felt as such by the country. How to prevent the recurrence of a scandal like this, by avoiding the possibility of a tie in future, is the question which is now being considered by the Government. The Government proposes to meet the difficulty by adding to the number of votes possessed by the District Boards and by making the number of votes uneven. Your proposal is precisely the same, with this difference that I claim for it that it is natural, while the system proposed by the Government is artificial. You add to the number of votes by adding to the number of your constituencies. The Government proposes to add to the number of votes by

giving plurality of votes to the District Boards, based upon their income. We say, let all the District Boards be divided into two electoral groups of an uneven number, each District Board having one vote as now. Our system is simple and is free from the complications which attends the Government system. It moves along the line of least resistance. What is still more important, it effectually prevents the possibility of a tie in connection with the District Board elections. The Government proposes two scales. I am afraid having regard to the lateness of the hour, I am precluded from entering into details. Under the first scale proposed by the Government, the chances of a tie are not avoided. Under the second scale, a slight alteration in the income of any District Board may upset the calculations of the Government and a tie may be inevitable. But the plan you recommend will operate with mathematical precision, and a tie can never occur.

So much with regard to the administrative difficulty. But I venture to recommend your proposal for the favourable consideration of Government upon higher grounds of statesmanship. Every constituency in and connected with Calcutta takes part in each election. Every constituency outside the Mahratta ditch is disfranchised for a season. The Calcutta University, the Calcutta Corporation, the Calcutta Trades Association, the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce all return a member to the local Council at each election. But the great divisions, outside the Presidency town, such as the Presidency Division, the Dacca Division and others, containing large populations and representing vast interests can return a number only periodically. This is an invidious distinction which involves a slur upon the moffusil, against which this Conference desires to record its respectful but firm protest. Our proposal, if accepted, does away with this distinction.

The next part of your Resolution has reference to a matter of great importance, in regard to which I apprehend



there will be little or no difference of opinion. We recommend that there should be as many voting delegates as there are votes. Take the case of the Howrah Municipality. It has eight votes. We say that instead of one delegate being elected, having eight votes, eight delegates should be elected, each having only one vote and no more. The advantages of such a system are obvious. It would provide a safeguard against cliquism, and reduce to a minimum the evils of canvassing ; for it is a more difficult matter to go about and solicit the votes of a large than of a small constituency. The next part of your Resolution says that zemindars and the Mahomedan community should be invested with the right of electing their own member. At present the Government appoints the members for these communities. The Maharaja of Durbhanga represents the the zemindars in the Bengal Council, and there could be no worthier representative of land-holders of Bengal. But the Maharaja would have felt his position stronger if he was the elected of the people rather than the nominee of Government. The Mahomedan community would also like to appoint their own member. The Government would do well to relieve itself of this responsibility. As for allowing the Zemindars to elect their own member why this was done in 1884. The Government of Lord Ripon invited the Zeminder Associations to send a member of their own to the Supreme Legislative Council on the occasion of the discussion of the Rent Bill. Kristo Dass Pal was returned by the zemindars as their member, and after his lamented death, the honor was conferred upon Raja Piyari Mohan Mookerjee. We ask the Government in 1896 to repeat an experiment, which it had tried in 1884. It is an eminently conservative proposal. As for the Mohomedan community, they have got their recognized Associations ; and these Associations, subject to such rules as the Government may frame, may be asked to nominate a member to represent the community. I do not see what

possible difficulty there could be to the acceptance of this proposal. It would be a graceful concession which would not in any way embarrass the Government, but would be received with gratitude by those concerned.

In this matter, there could be no antagonism of interest between the Government and the community. We are all interested in seeing that the Parliamentary statute is carried out, and that the purposes of a wise and beneficent legislation are not-frustrated. Sir Alexander Mackenzie has been described to be a beneficent conservative. He is a conservative of the type of Burke, with the instincts of a genuine statesman. He must recognize the fact that change is necessary for the purposes of conservation, and the change in the rules which we recommend would give fuller effect to a Parliamentary enactment, would broaden the basis of representation in this country, strengthen his own Council, help forward the purposes of good Government, and entitle him to the lasting gratitude of the people. Therefore we feel the less hesitation in recommending the Resolution which I have the honour to move, to the acceptance of the Government and the community.

#### BABU SURENDRANATH BANERJEA'S SPEECH AT THE SIR COMER PETHERAM MEETING.

Sir,—I have great pleasure in supporting this Resolution. *Speaking for myself, and speaking only for myself, I should have preferred a public meeting of the general community to a public meeting of friends and admirers. Pardon me if I venture to say that a public meeting of friends and admirers involves a contradiction in terms. However that may be, such is the unanimity of public sentiment on the subject—the general sense of admiration felt for the many excellent qualities of head and heart which distinguish*

Sir Comer Patheram—the universal regret at his approaching departure, such in short is the volume and intensity of the public sentiment which underlies this movement, that I have no hesitation in saying that a public meeting, and a public meeting alone would do justice—adequate justice—to the requirements of the situation. But at the same time, Sir, I recognize the great truth that the law of compromise—compromise not divorced from morality, but inseparably associated with it—is the essence of public business. In this unhappy world we cannot get everything that we want, and we have to adapt ourselves to the exigencies of our situation. If under the circumstances a public meeting was impossible we had to be satisfied with the next best thing, viz, a meeting of friends and admirers. But the friends are so numerous, so influential, so representative in their character, occupying such commanding positions in society that I am glad to be able to say that this meeting of friends has assumed the proportions and the magnitude of a great public demonstration. I rejoice to be able to bear my part and share in it for a reason which I am sure will appeal to the sympathies of all who are listening to me and of that wider public beyond the sound of my voice. Here are gathered together the leaders of all sections of our community, animated by a common sentiment of respect and admiration for a distinguished officer of the Government who is about to lay down the responsibilities of his high position. A demonstration like this has a deeper significance than the immediate object which has brought it about. It serves to unite together, by the ties of a common citizenship in the performance of common civic duties, the representatives of different sections of our somewhat heterogeneous community, upon whose sympathy and good-will towards each other depend the best interests of the country. No matter what may be our religious differences, no matter what may be the character and complexion of our peculiar social usages, no matter whether we are Hindus, Mahomedans

or Christians, a demonstration like this brings home to our minds the truth that we are the subjects of the same sovereign, living under the same Government and the same political institutions, attached by the ties of a common duty and allegiance to that throne, whose permanence and stability in this country is the guarantee of civilized rule for two hundred millions of human beings. It is because a meeting like this is calculated to foster good feelings between our leading men that I welcome it and am glad to be here. I can only express the hope that these feelings of amity and concord may grow and deepen for the sake of our mutual interests and the benefit of our common empire. There is yet another consideration why I rejoice to be able to bear the testimony of my gratitude to the retiring Chief Justice. I am a journalist, and belong to a class of the community who are supposed to have developed an extraordinary aptitude for finding fault, especially with the high officers of Government. No doubt as journalists, it is our duty to criticize and to remonstrate, and sometimes even to find fault : for in the felicitous language of Sir William Hunter the native Press constitute Her Majesty's Opposition in India. But the attitude of the Indian Press in regard to this demonstration is significant. It is an attitude of sympathy. It affords evidence that we can criticize with discrimination, that we can praise where praise is due, and that we are always prepared to render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's. And who ever better deserved praise than the retiring Chief Justice? Amid the conflict of rival interests, amid the fierce war of hostile passions which are calculated to disturb the serene course of justice, Sir Comer Petheram maintained the balance evenly, and so comported himself in his high position as to have won in an unstinted measure the gratitude of a united community. Long and distinguished is the muster-roll of these illustrious men who from time to time have held the high office of Chief

Justice of Bengal. There have been abler men, more distinguished lawyers, more vigorous administrators than Sir Comer Petheram. But point out to me any one among the most distinguished of his predecessors who within living memory has elicited a tithe of that public respect and gratitude which follows Sir Comer Petheram in his retirement. What is the secret? It is easily told. It is admirably told in that eloquent address in which I see the Roman hand of my friend Mr. Apar. It is a secret which any one who runs may read. Sir Comer Petheram maintained the high traditions of the English Bench—he exhibited in the performance of his duties that independence of character which is the crowning attribute of English Judges, tempered by a large hearted sympathy and kindness of feeling which half reconciled the severity of the law to those who suffered most from it. The High Court is the palladium of our rights—the bulwark of popular privileges—the sanctuary of the weak and the oppressed. Persecuted and harassed by an unscrupulous Police, convicted by Magistrates who at each stage are exposed to check and interference at the hands of executive authority, it is to the High Court that our people in their distress turn for safety, for protection and for justice; and they do not appeal to the High Court in vain. I have not the smallest hesitation in saying—I shall not be guilty of any exaggeration if I say it—that it is the one institution in the land which more than any other draws to itself the largest measure of public confidence and respect. To have been the Chief Justice of such a court is no mean honour. To have been the Chief Justice of such a court and to have discharged the duties of Chief Justice with the full approbation of a united community is a distinction of which any servant of the Crown might well be proud. It is a distinction which belongs to Sir Comer Petheram. The position of Chief Justice of the High Court of Bengal is one of unique dignity and responsibility. Let it be said

to the lasting credit of Sir Comer Petheram that he performed his duties with honor to himself and with satisfaction to the public. He maintained the high Court in the undiminished possession of its ancient traditions and confirmed it in the public regard. This is a service of no mean importance. One who does it is entitled to be called a public benefactor. Sir Comer Patheram may have done no more than what was his duty, but we have been benefitted, and we are grateful to him for it. They say—it is a calumny—a thrice-exploded calumny—that the word gratitude does not occur in the Indian dialects—although these dialects derive their vocabulary from the inexhaustible resources of one of the most copious languages which have ever formed the speech of man, the mother of all languages, the language of the gods in the words of our Aryan ancestors. However that may be whether we have the word or not, the sentiment is there, deep-seated in our heart of hearts, and in obedience to that overwhelming impulse, we are here to render to the retiring Chief Justice the homage of our hearts. We wish him god-speed. We wish him health and happiness and prosperity and many years of useful life in his retirement. Above all, we rely upon him for help in that struggle in which we are engaged to rid the judicial system of this country of all executive control and interference. The proposal is admitted to be a just one. It has been described as a counsel of perfection. Lord George Hamilton, speaking from his place in the House of Commons, in connection with the recent debate upon the Indian budget, observed that the Government of India were taking steps in that direction. What those steps are we have yet to know. Sir Richard Garth, late Chief Justice, is nobly working in the same field. We appeal to Sir Comer Petheram to associate himself with Sir Richard Garth in this matter, to remember us, as we shall remember him with gratitude, to feel an interest in the well-being of that country with which he has so long and so intimately been associated, and above

all to help forward the progress of that reform which by placing the judicial system of the country upon a sound and satisfactory basis will not only add to the happiness of the people, but will also contribute to the stability of British rule ; for the truth cannot be too often repeated or too emphatically proclaimed, that this vast, this stupendous, this majestic fabric of Empire depends for its permanence not so much upon its inexhaustible military resources, as upon the love, the gratitude, the willing allegiance of its multitudinous population, united to the British connection by the deep and profound conviction that it is a connection sanctified by Divine Providence and consecrated by the eternal principles of universal justice.

AT THE MUNICIPAL MEETING IN CONNECTION WITH H. H. THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR'S SPEECH AT ENTALLY.

Sir,—I have the honour to move the first Resolution. The terms of the Resolution are as follows :—(Here reads the Resolution.) In moving this Resolution I desire to guard myself against a misconception which the circumstances of the case may give rise to. The wisdom of holding this meeting has been doubted in some quarters, and our attitude has been misconstrued. I desire to say on my own behalf and I may add on behalf of those who have signed the requisition, that our attitude is not one of defiance but of defence—it is an attitude of explanation and of vindication. We are all here animated by a common sentiment of dutiful allegiance to the honoured Head of the Government of these Provinces—by the belief—in my case I will add, the assured conviction that when we have stated our case as it ought to be stated, and have laid before His Honour the facts and arguments as they ought to be laid, and when upon the basis of those facts we appeal to him for justice and fair play, then we are sure

His Honour with an Englishman's instinct will accord to us a sympathetic response. In that hope and confidence we have convened this meeting. In that hope and confidence we desire to approach His Honor\* with the appeal that His Honour will be pleased to reconsider his judgment, at least so much of it as involves a censure of the Municipality. Our case is so strong—it is so overwhelmingly convincing—that we have only to state it to carry home conviction to every unprejudiced mind and to dissipate the misconceptions which have gathered round His Honor's speech. We fully recognize our position in relation to the Government. It is a position of subordination strictly safe-guarded under limitations imposed by the law. In one sense we are an arm of the administration. An important branch of public affairs has been entrusted to our care. But at the same time we cannot forget that we are also the representatives of the people. We are here, because our constituents have sent us here. They can make and unmake us. Their confidence is to us the breath of our nostrils. Their approbation, next to the approbation of our own consciences, is the highest reward we can aspire to. But when our administration has been arraigned in the way it has been arraigned by the Head of the Local Government, then we incur the imminent risk of losing the confidence of our constituents unless we are able to vindicate our administration and justify it in their eyes. Duty to them and ourselves—duty to the public and the Government alike—renders it necessary that we should enter upon a formal and public defence of our administration. Such, however, is our faith in the justice of our case that we feel that we may rely with absolute confidence upon the approving judgment of public opinion. The Resolution says that we have been condemned by His Honor—condemned unheard—condemned under circumstances which make the condemnation unmerited and inappropriate to the occasion. Have we been condemned or not? I heard Mr. Farr say that he was not aware that we had been condemned by the



Lieutenant-Governor. I am sorry that Mr. Farr and his friends have left the meeting before they had heard all that we had to say. If we have not been condemned, such a meeting as this would be utterly out of place, and I should be offering an insult, a deliberate affront to your understanding, were I to ask you to accept the Resolution which I have the honor to move. Sir, as I listened to the speech of His Honor when it was delivered, as I read it in the newspapers in print, it seemed to me, as it must have seemed to all of you, that it involved a scathing unqualified condemnation of the Commissioners. Since then however an explanation has been offered. The Hon'ble Mr. Risley, writing on behalf of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor in a communication addressed to the Medical Board, has explained that His Honor has a perfectly open mind on the question of responsibility and that it is a mistake to suppose that he intended that the executive were blameless in the matter of the sanitary shortcomings of Calcutta, and that the Commissioners alone were to blame. For my part, I am not prepared to accept the inference which underlies these remarks. I am not prepared and you are not prepared to accept the distinction which is sought to be made here between the Commissioners and their Executive. The Commissioners and the Executive form integral parts, inseparable elements of the Corporation. To condemn the Executive is to condemn the Commissioners. To condemn the Executive is to say that the Commissioners have been remiss in their supervision of their work. Nay more, we are not prepared to permit an extraneous authority—however exalted that authority might be—to interpose between ourselves and our employees and apportion the measure of responsibility between us. Nothing could be more demoralizing to the Executive, more utterly subversive of official discipline. It has never been a part of the traditions of the Corporation to regard the executive as separate from the Commissioners in the matter of responsibility. In the dark days of the Corporation when a Commission was appointed, the Executive under the guidance of

Sir Henry Harrison cordially co-operated with the Commissioners in defending the menaced interests of Corporation. I hope we are not going to depart from those traditions. I hope those traditions have not become matters of ancient history. I hope, Sir, you as the Head of the Executive will by your vote to-day once again affirm the principle that your honour or dishonour means our honour or dishonour.

Thus, then, notwithstanding the explanation which has been offered, we are driven to the conclusion that we have been condemned. The Resolution says that the condemnation passed upon the Commissioners was unmerited and inappropriate to the occasion and that it was passed without affording them the opportunity of explanation or defence. The Lieutenant-Governor was the guest of the Commissioners. The Commissioners were his hosts. He was their honoured guest. For the guest to turn round upon his hosts and to censure them is a proceeding which will not recommend itself to the approval of right-thinking men. Then again what was the occasion which had brought the Lieutenant-Governor to Entally? He had come to open the new Drainage works—to preside at a function which associated with the inauguration of the most important sanitary work of the generation. It will occur to most people that such an occasion was singularly inopportune for censuring the Commissioners for their alleged neglect of the sanitation of Calcutta. The function itself was the most striking refutation of the charge. Even the *Pioneer* newspaper, the accredited organ of the official hierarchy, condemned the speech as being unsuitable to the occasion on which it was delivered. But we further complain that we have been condemned unheard. The Lieutenant-Governor based his remarks upon the Report of the Sanitary Inspectors; but the Report was never sent to the Commissioners for explanation. It is an eternal principle of justice that no man shall be condemned unheard. Is the Corporation alone to be singled out for exceptional treatment? The veriest

murderer caught red-handed in the act, reeking with the blood of his innocent victim, is allowed, such is the humanity of the law, the opportunity of explanation and defence. But this great Corporation, the greatest representative body in India, with a record which would bear favourable comparison with the record of any similar body in any other part of the world, is denied this privilege. And by whom? The Head of the Local Government. And who is the Head of the Local Government? The distinguished administrator who was late Secretary to Lord Ripon's Government—a Government that placed the system of Local Self-Government in India upon a firm and durable basis and covered itself with ever-lasting honour and glory. I am constrained to say—I say it with all reluctance—but I must say it—in the words of the greatest of English poets that we are fallen upon evil times and upon evil tongues, and by darkness and danger compassed round. But, Sir, we also complain that His Honour's speech, was based upon a grave misapprehension of the facts of the case. The third Resolution in charge of my friend deals with the mistakes of fact bearing upon the conservancy of the town. I will not trespass into my friend's province. But there are mistakes of fact not covered by the third Resolution, and to some of these I desire to call your attention. We have been set down as a set of talkers wasting our time in talk. The charge of loquacity has been laid to our doors. With reference to this charge, I will say this that speech is governing the politics of the civilized world. I hope and trust that within a measurable distance of time it will govern the politics of the Indian Continent. Government by speech is the order of the day. Not even the omnipotence of autocracy will avail to arrest or postpone the slow, the steady, the triumphant development of these forces, working noiselessly in the bosom of society, which are hastening forward the accomplishment of this great end. However that may be, is it true that we make speeches for the sake of speech-making—that we talk more than we should? Is

it the case that we are "an armoury of talk," to use the words of a late distinguished Secretary to the Government of Bengal? Those who are most familiar with the working of the Corporation are the best judges in this matter. In this case the saying is not true that the spectators see more of the game than the actual players. The spectators must see less for they have to rely upon hearsay evidence. In modern Indian history, there is no name more honoured than that of Kristo Das Pal, there never was a member of this body who rendered greater services to the Corporation and the town, or whose utterances are entitled to more weight. Speaking in 1881 of the elected municipality, then in its early years, he observed :—

'An examination of the Municipal debates in the past and present will, we doubt not, satisfy the most fastidious person that there is less talk now than before. It is superfluous for us to say that public questions cannot be decided without talk, long or small, and that the character of the talk in public bodies is to a great extent regulated by the information possessed and the earnestness of convictions entertained by different speakers. Life itself is a long talk. If the world consisted only of mutes, then society would hardly exist. In all the waking moments of life man spends much of his time in talk, whether for business, instruction or pleasure. Public life in the civilized world means a war of words.'

But Kristo Das Pal was himself a greater talker. The most accomplished debater of his time, he might be presumed to be partial to speech-making. Further he laboured under serious disability that he was not an official, and to some minds, present company of course always excepted, official testimony has the force and validity of gospel truth. Therefore let me pass from un-official to official testimony, and the testimony, which I am about to quote will be that of perhaps the most distinguished civilian who has ever held

the office of Chairman. Thus spoke Sir Henry Harrison in 1887 :—

When large questions of principle came up for final discussion in general meeting, it could not but be expected that the men of leisure, who naturally took an interest in the work which they had helped to complete, would also naturally be prepared to discuss at length the questions which were under consideration ; but the men of business would not like to sit for two or three hours to discuss them. It was unreasonable to suppose that this could be otherwise, and when European gentleman did take an interest in such matters, they themselves fell into the habit of making as long speeches as native gentlemen. Some of the longest speeches he had ever listened to were made by European gentlemen in debates in which they were taking a great interest.

But 1896 is not 1887, and that may make a difference. Let me therefore come to more recent times and quote a more modern authority. Let me quote the words of the late lamented Mr. Lee whose early death was such a heavy loss to the Corporation and the town :—

Less frequently now than of old, because the outside public is better acquainted with the facts, but still occasionally, we hear insinuations that much time is wasted in this hall by long speeches from the Municipal Commissioners. No charge could be further from the mark. In all my experience—and that has covered full three years—I have seldom listened to a speech that has not been useful and to the point. I can hardly recall a single instance in which I have made reflection that the speaker was throwing no new light on his subject, and was simply speaking to make a speech. The facts, indeed, are conclusive. In the course of the year you hold some thirty General meetings. All the proceedings of every committee meeting, of which some 250 are held in the course of the year, come before you in this hall for review. A single Committee will frequently

deal with 20 or more separate matters, and you have on the average to review proceedings of such Committees at each single meeting in this hall, so that you dispose of sometimes 120, seldom less than forty items of business at a sitting. How long do you take over it ? As a rule between one and two hours ! Who could say with fairness that that is excessive ? How many similar deliberative bodies in the world are there that would dispose of the work in less time ? The general rule that we endeavour to observe is not to speak without special knowledge and clear opinion, and then to express our thoughts in language as brief as we can make it.

These words possess a pathetic interest for us ; for they were the last words addressed by Mr. Lee to this Corporation—they form part of his valedictory address delivered on the 23rd March 1893.

From opinions let us pass on to the consideration of the facts of the case ; and in this connection, I desire to congratulate my friend, Babu Nolin Behary Sircar, upon the admirable statement which he has drawn up, traversing the various points raised in His Honor's speech. We find from the table in Babu Nolin Behary Sircar's statement that in 1894-95 there were 239 items of business brought up before the Commissioners. Out of them 191 items were disposed of without discussion. There were 38 items in which short speeches were made, and there were only 10 items which gave rise to long debates. In 1895-96, there were 328 items of business which were brought before the Commissioners, and so many as 249 items of business disposed of without any discussion. Further we find that in 1894-95 the attendance of Commissioners at a meeting was forty on an average, of whom only six spoke, 34 giving "silent, sensible votes." In 1895-96, the average attendance of Commissioners at each meeting was 41, of whom only 7 spoke on an average, 34 giving "silent, sensible votes."

This charge has again and again been brought and as

often refuted. Falsehood dies hard. It is a hydra-headed monster, which rears its head as often as you slay it. You have slain the monster this time. You may not be too sure that you will not have to repeat the operation. Then Sir our constitution has been assailed. For our constitution we are not responsible. We do the best with it. It has been observed by Sir Alexander Mackenzie that the municipal constitution of Calcutta is derived *en bloc* from the most advanced models in England, and that it has been determined without reference to the totally different circumstances of an Oriental city and a mixed community. The statement involves a serious misapprehension of facts. Point out to me the Town-Council or Municipality in England the members of which are partly elected and partly nominated. Point out to me the Town-Council or Municipality in England the Mayor of which is nominated by the Government. Point out to me the Town Council or Municipality in England which is subjected to the same measure of control to which we are subjected at the hands of the Executive Government. Then again it is not the case that the varied and diversified interests of an oriental city and of a mixed community were not sufficiently borne in mind in framing the constitution. Read the debates which took place in Council in 1876 when the constitution was framed, and again in 1888 when it came on for review (I will not tire your patience by quoting extracts) and you will find that the illustrious men who framed the constitution and these who remodelled it, men like Sir Stuart Hogg and Sir Henry Harrison, paid special attention to the representation of the varied interests of our community, and took the necessary precautions to secure that end. But after all is our constitution so bad? It has been pronounced to be a success by distinguished men of the eminence of the late Mr. Colman Macaulay and others. A tree is judged by its fruits. Look at the achievements of the elected Municipality. The solvency of the Municipality secured upon a firm and durable basis, the increased and increasing credit of the

Corporation until that credit is as good as that of the Government of India, the magnificent works of sanitation which have changed the face Calcutta until it has become a sanitarium for all Bengal—these are the enduring memorials of the wisdom, the judgment, the sagacity and public spirit of the much-maligned elected Commissioners of Calcutta. I should like to know what department under the direct control of the Government could show such satisfactory results. You complain of the over-crowding of Calcutta. To what is it due, may I ask? People from the mofussil flock to Calcutta as to a sanitarium from their malaria-stricken homes. Within the last twenty years the price of land in Calcutta has been trebled. Has the volume of your trade increased threefold? No. What then is the explanation? The demand for land has steadily increased owing to the increasing healthiness of Calcutta. Why the elected commissioners during the time they have been in office have spent nearly two crores and fifty lakhs of rupees upon works of permanent utility; the Justices spent only a crore and eighty laks during the time they administered the affairs of Calcutta.

It is too late in the day to criticize the constitution. It has stood the stress of twenty long years. It has been pronounced to be a success by high authority. It has produced the magnificent results to which I have referred. It has secured the financial solvency of the Corporation and has improved its credit. Time destroys all shams and impositions. If ours was a bastard constitution unsuited to the exigencies of the situation, it would have long ago gone the way of all things. I am obliged to say that never was there a grosser misconception than what pervades this part of the speech of His Honor Lieutenant-Governor.

Then, sir, it has been observed that our executive is weak and can be easily upset. The suggestion is that we interfere unnecessarily with the executive. Sir, I appeal to you as the Head of the executive—I would like to appeal to



Mr. Hughes, as the head of the spending department of the Corporation—whether you have found any difficulty in getting on with the Commissioners—I should like to know whether any Chairman, any Health Officer, save and except Dr. Simpson, has ever experienced any difficulty in this respect. If Dr. Simpson had all his own way, I very much fear Calcutta would have been declared a plague-stricken city quarantine regulations would have been enforced, the trade of Calcutta ruined, and the Municipality reduced to bankruptcy.

One word more, before I conclude. His Honor has been pleased to observe that as regards many of us our individual stake in the town is small, that we represent ourselves in the first instance, and a mass of heterogenous interests in the second. We cannot very well help representing ourselves. That we represent ourselves and that we represent a mass of heterogenous interests (by which I understand the interests of our constituents, who are Hindus and Mahomedans) may be our misfortune, but is certainly not our fault. But I deny altogether that we have little or no stake in the town. I will venture to say that we have much greater stake than the birds of passage who come here to shake the pagoda tree and run away with our gold. We have a small stake in the town! Why the dust of our home-steads is consecrated by the ashes of our sires. Calcutta is the home of our ancestors—it is the home of our wives, our mothers and our daughters—it is the destined home of our children and our children's children. If ever the plague were to break out here—may God avert such a calamity—where would the birds of passage be? We shall however continue to cling to the habitations of our ancestors with fond and devoted affection. Nothing in history, nothing in fable exceeds, the love and devotion which the Hindu feels for his homestead. It is the centre of all his joys—round it gather the noblest and the tenderest of his domestic associations. They cannot indeed be transformed into gold—what gold can measure them! But are sentimental considerations of no weight in the concerns of

life—are they to count as a feather in the balance in dealing with a people who are largely governed by sentiment? I will not detain you any longer. I trust our vote to-day will be a unanimous vote. This Corporation recognizes no distinction of race—no difference between official and non-officials, between the Commissioners and the executive. Here we are all members of a common body; animated by a common sentiment and a common desire to maintain untarnished the honor the reputation and the dignity of this great Corporation which it is our privilege to serve. We remember with pride that when the Corporation was assailed by popular clamour and placed on its trial, Europeans and Indians, the Executive and the Commissioners stood shoulder to shoulder, firmly knitted together as one body, resolved to defend the menaced interests of the Corporation. Are we now going to prove false to our traditions? No mistake we are in the midst of a grave crisis, as grave as any one which has ever occurred in the history of the Corporation; for only the other day—I think it was on Saturday last,—His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor observed from his place in Council that a considerable amendment of the Calcutta Municipal Act might be expected. I do not take it in the light of a threat, but as the serious pronouncement of a deliberate opinion on the part of a responsible statesman. However that may be, I will say this on my own behalf, and I will venture to add on your behalf, that so long as we are members of this Corporation, so long as we are entrusted with the municipal administration of this city, so long as the safe guarding of the constitution under which we work is in our hands, so long we shall manfully endeavour to perform our duties, undaunted by the frowns and unseduced by the smiles of power. In order that we may thus perform our duties, and in a manner that will redound to our own credit and to the benefit of the Corporation, the most perfect accord, the most cordial unanimity should subsist between us. In this as in other matters, united we stand, divided we fall.

**BABU SURENDRANATH BANERJEA'S SPEECH  
ON THE FAMINE QUESTION AT THE  
NATIONAL CONGRESS.**

I have the honor to move the 12th resolution which runs in these terms :—( Here reads the Resolution.)

I desire to accord to you my most grateful acknowledgments for the cordial welcome which you have given me. I need all the sympathy and support of this great Congress to enable me to perform the mournful task which has devolved upon me—the saddest which has ever fallen to the lot of any man (cheers). To day we meet under the shadow of a great—I will not say—an unprecedented calamity—for unfortunately our history is full of it—but a calamity which has not overtaken us since the birth of the Congress. I do not wish it to be understood for one moment that there is any necessary connection between the Congress and the famine. But this I do mean to urge both on your behalf, and I may add, on my own behalf, that if the Government had accepted the policy which has been formulated from this platform—which has been enunciated times without number,—a policy of justice and beneficence, tempered by economy—these famines would have become matters of ancient history, and the world would have been spared the perusal of those harrowing tales of starvation, if not of death, which constitute a discredit to any civilised administration (Loud cheers). A great French authority, the father of modern Zoology, the illustrious Cuvier, has somewhere remarked in his works that famines are impossible in this age. So they are in European countries ; but not in this fabled land of wealth, the gorgeous Ind of the poet, possessed of the fatal gift of beauty and of wealth, the granary of the East, the garden of Asia (cheers). Here famines are matters of every day incident—they are permanent factors in our history which the Government of the country is bound to take note of. They occur with the periodicity of the seasons,

and when they occur my countrymen perish by millions. The history of British India is the history of famines. Rejecting for a moment all considerations of ancient history and coming down to more modern times, we find there was a famine in 1866, and famine in 1873-74, a famine in 1877-78, and last but not least the famine of 1896. Unlike the famine of 1866 which was confined to Orissa, unlike the famine of 1873-74 which was confined to Behar, unlike the famine of 1877-78 which decimated Madras, the famine of 1896 is universal, all-embracing, holding in its death-grip the vast Indian continent, with its multitudinous population (Loud cheers). It may vary in different parts of the country in the measure of its intensity, but it is felt all over the Indian continent. Perhaps it is most severely felt in the Central Provinces,—perhaps in the Central Provinces the arrangements to meet it are the most defective. An English writer—a spectator—disinterested nonofficial Englishman—to whom we owe the tribute of our gratitude (hear—hear)—an English eye-witness, writing in the columns of the *Pioneer* and describing the famine of the Central Provinces has used language which fills me with unutterable pain. People starving—the miserable wretches dropping on the road-side, dropping in the jungles, in their homes, in the poor-houses, dying by hundreds, dying by thousands—these are the words of that witness. Yet Lord Elgin was able to felicitate himself upon the prosperous condition of the Central Provinces up to the gates of Jubbulpur, (cries of Shame)—and to observe that there was only the probability of a famine occurring in a portion of that Province. I think I speak the sense of this great Congress when I say that we all here,—Congress men or no Congress men—we are all animated by a common sentiment of dutiful allegiance to the honoured head of the Government of India. As the representative of our Sovereign we owe him the homage of our hearts. But we owe even him a higher homage—the homage of truth—the obligation—the paramount obligation

—imposed upon us by every consideration of duty and sentiment alike, when we approach the footsteps of the viceregal throne to lay before His Excellency the truth—the whole truth and nothing but the truth (Loud cheers.) The simple, plain, unvarnished, unalloyed truth compels us to say that His Excellency has made a deplorable blunder in the view he has taken—that his optimistic view of the situation may be fruitful of the most disastrous results. I am not going to pit the opinion of any one, however high and distinguished he may be, against the authority of the Viceroy of India. The opinion of Lord Elgin must over-ride all conflicting views ; but I hold in my hand a statement for which I am indebted to the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* which has done admirable service in this connection which tells its own eloquent tale upon the state of things as they prevail in the Central Provinces. From opinion then let us pass on to facts—and what is the testimony of facts ? I want your undivided attention for a moment as I go through this dreadful record of suffering and mortality. In January 1894 the death rate at Jubbulpore per thousand was 25·07—that is the normal rate. In September 1896 two years later what do you think was the death-rate ? It was 97·38 four times the death rate of January 1894. That is as regards Jubbulpore. Let us travel onwards—let us come to Sangor. In Sangor the death rate was 48·69 per thousand in 1894. In September last what do you think was the death rate ? 96·93. Just treble of what it was in 1894. In Damoh in September 1894 the rate was 44·40. In September 1896 what do you think was the mortality ? 138·07 (Shame, Shame.) Shame is not the word. It is a matter of grave discredit that these deaths should take place, and yet any ruler with any sense of responsibility should congratulate himself upon the prosperous condition of the country which reveals this frightful record. In Seoni the rate was 25·44 in August 1894, but in August 1896 the death rate was 88·1 ; and now I come to the last of the districts mentioned in that article of

my friend to which I have referred. In Mandla the death rate was 36·56 in August 1894 and 140·30 in August last—that is to say more than four times what it was in the same month in 1894. I ask could there be a sadder or a more striking refutation of the optimistic view taken by His Excellency the Viceroy or a more complete vindication of the position taken up by the independent eyewitness to whom I have referred? I have yet more convincing proofs than what are furnished by the inexorable logic of figures. I have got before me a packet which was handed to me by my friends, the Editor of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, just as I entered this room—a packet giving photographs of the emaciated, death-stricken figures starving in the poor houses of Jubbulpore. I dare not open this packet for your inspection. The very sight of these photographs would convince you of the gravity of the situation. (The speaker then handed some of the photographs to the delegates). That is the state of things in the Central Provinces. What has been the result of the optimistic view which the Viceroy has taken in regard to the state of affairs in the Central Provinces and generally in regard to the whole question of famine? The Secretary of State at the instance of the Government of India will not accept the offers of help which have been made by the Lord Mayor of London and also by the manufacturers of Lancashire, to whom the grateful acknowledgments of the Congress and of the nation are due for this proffered help at this time of our sorest need (Loud cheers). People are dropping on the road-side, in the jungles, in their homes, in the poor houses, dying by hundreds and by thousands. The Government will not save them, nor will it accept the proffered hand of help that is outstretched to save them. Is it because if the English people found that their pockets were touched they would like to know the reason why? Is it because if the English people had to pay, they would make enquiries—unpleasant enquiries—with regard to the condition of the people and

the circumstances of the Government? Is it because the English people would ask why in this country more than in any other, these famines so frequently occurred? Very unpleasant questions these Mr. Chairman, and the local authorities would naturally be anxious that they should not be asked by the real masters of India. In Bengal we are also suffering from the pinch of famine. In Behar the scarcity is most severely felt, but there the Government has got the help of the great territorial magnates, the foremost of whom is His Highness the Maharaja of Durbhanga, (three cheers for the Maharaja of Durbhanga.) I think I express the sense of this meeting when I say that we all rejoice that His Highness is better, and we all hope that he may long be spared to carry on his patriotic labours and set an example of patriotic duty to the aristocracy of Bengal. (Loud cheers.) Ladies and gentlemen, the situation in Bengal is somewhat complicated by another consideration. We are suffering from scarcity of water. We suffered from it last year and we are confronted with that calamity in an acuter form in the year to come. Of course the Government is prepared with a remedy. The Government is ready with a Bill which is the usual remedy in such cases. We have a Bill in this connection, and what does that Bill provide? A new tax; but the pill is gilded for us. It is to be a permissive measure of taxation. Not only that, it is to be associated with a further expansion of the principle of local self-government. The power of taxation is to be entrusted to village unions—the primary centres of local self-government. Might I be permitted to ask the Government—I am full of gratitude to the Government for its sympathy with local self-government—whether it might not extend the principle in relation to the existing forms of taxation—and why it should be necessary to impose a new tax to initiate still further into the mysteries of local self-government? At any rate our countrymen have a legitimate grievance in this matter. They say—and the newspapers echo the sentiment—we pay the

road cess, the road cess should be devoted to the purposes of tank-digging ; why should we be burdened with another tax when the Government has frittered away the proceeds of the road cess ? Be that as it may, the Government of Sir Alexander Mackenzie is fully alive to the gravity of the situation. Relief works have been started at some places ; a complete system of relief organisation has also been sketched out. For all this we are grateful to the Government of Sir Alexander Mackenzie.

You say in your Resolution that the provision of the Famine Code are inadequate as regards wages and as regards the relief afforded, and oppressive as regards the measure of the task-work exacted from the people. Well gentlemen some of you may have studied the Code. There is a remarkable provision in that Code. A full time labourer, working with his system reduced by starvation, is to get how much do you think ? Six pice, not even two annas. He may get another piece if the Commissioner of the Division should so recommend it. (Shame) I really think it is a matter of shame. What do our prisoners get ? I was in prison myself on one occasion, and I know something about it, although I confess I was not subjected to prison diet. (Loud laughter.) My personal experience will not indeed help me, but as a visitor of the most important prison in this Province I know something about prison diet. The prisoner's diet would come up to about two annas per day ; the famine stricken-labourer gets only six pice. If I had to make a choice I would go and I steal and get myself locked in prison in order that I might get more food than what is available at the relief works and I must say that the Government offers by such a provision as this a powerful incentive to the commission of crime. That of course is a matter with which the Local Government cannot deal ; that is a matter in regard to which this Congress may express its opinion but it is only the Government of India which can apply the remedy. However that may be, there can be no doubt that



the triumphs of famine organization are to be found in the N. W. P. and I think I express the sense of this Congress when I say that our most grateful acknowledgments are due to Sir Antony MacDonnell for his sympathetic policy in relation to the famine (Loud cheers.) The blessings of Heaven will descend upon a ruler who has been instrumental in saving the lives of his subjects. (Loud cheers.) It is to be hoped that other local Governments will imitate the example set by Sir Antony MacDonnell, and I may be permitted also to express a further hope that the Government of India may have its views largely leavened by the beneficent policy of the Lieutenant Governor of the North Western Provinces (cheers.) Sir you express in this resolution your great concern at the outbreak of famine. 320

Well Sir, a great authority, no less a personage than the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, has told us that famines are visitations of Providence—they are the judgments of the Almighty. That indeed is mere truism ; it is a safe pronouncement to make ; it does not exhibit much wisdom on the part of the individual who makes it, nor does he incur the risk of losing the reputation for wisdom if he ever possessed any. (Laughter.) But I think we might ask the Chief Commissioner to climb down a little from the region of mysticism to the region of pure knowledge ; we might ask him to descend from those ethereal heights where we move under the uncertain inspiration of faith to mundane concerns where reason is our guide, and we might be permitted to ask him the question why in India more than in any other country famines occur, these visitations of Providence take place ? Is it because the sins of our people have so accumulated, that they appeal trumpet-tongued to the Almighty for vengeance, or is it because the blunders of our rulers have become so great and so pressing, that the Divine mandate working through the sure and unerring processes of nature visits us with these punishments ? I know not what may be the solution of this mystery, but this I do affirm on

your behalf that we ascribe this famine and similar famines to the great and deplorable poverty of our people, a poverty accentuated by over-taxation and over-assessment, and brought on by the extravagance of one of the most reckless governments that the world has ever seen. I will not enter into the question of Indian poverty, I went into it very fully last year. You know perfectly well that fully 40 millions of our people live upon one meal a day ; you know also that we have to pay an exorbitant rate of taxation upon our small incomes, the Indian tax-payer paying a tax of eight per cent upon an average income per head of 27 Rs. a year while the English tax-payer pays a tax of 7 per cent upon an average income per head of £33 a year. I find it has been denied that the position of the peasantry has distinctly deteriorated under British rule. It is said that the wages of labour have risen enormously, and that this rise represents a corresponding measure of increase in the happiness of the people. I dispute this proposition altogether. My contention is that notwithstanding the abnormal rise in the wages of labour, the condition of the labourer at the present moment is much worse than it was in the time of Akbar, and I am prepared with facts and figures to support the view which I hold. The facts which I am about to lay before you are taken from Mr. P. N. Bose's admirable work on Hindu Civilisation.

The following table gives the wages of some labourers during the reign of Akbar :—

							Rs.	A.	P.
Carpenters	...	0	2	9	3/5	to	0	0	9 3/5
Bricklayers	...	0	1	4	4/5	to	0	1	2 2/5
Bamboo-cutters	...	0	0	9	3/5				
Thatchers	...	0	1	2	2/5				
Water-carriers	...	0	1	2	2/5	to	0	0	9 3/5

The following are the average prices of some of the commonest articles of consumption during the same reign :—

	Rs. A. P.
Wheat	<i>per maund</i> ... 0 4 9 3/5 ..

	<i>per maund</i>	...	Rs.	A.	P.
Lentils	"	...	0	4	9 3/5
Barley	"	...	0	3	2 2/5
Millet	"	...	0	2	4 4/5
Sathi rice	"	...	0	8	0
Zirhi rice	"	...	1	0	0
Moth Dal	"	...	0	4	9 3/5
Wheat flour (coarse)	"	...	0	6	0
Mung Dal	"	...	0	7	2 2/5
Ghee	"	...	2	10	0
Oil	"	...	2	0	0
Milk	"	...	0	10	0
Brown Sugar	"	...	1	6	4
Salt	"	...	0	6	4 4/5
Onions	"	...	0	2	4 4/5
Turmeric	"	...	0	4	0
Stlahati cloth, per yard	"	...	0	1	7 1/5
Blankets, coarse per piece	"	...	0	4	0

The monthly dietetic requirements of a flour eating average adult labourer would be :—

	Seers.	...	Rs.	A.	P.
Flour	25	...	0	3	9
Dal	5	...	0	0	7 1/2
Ghee	1	...	0	1	0 1/5
Salt	1	...	0	0	2 4/5

Total... 0 5 7 4/5

Upon this table Mr. Bose makes the following pertinent observations :—

“ Making allowance for condiments and other little things an adult labourer could live comfortably during the reign of Akbar on six annas per month. Taking his family to consist of five members (himself, his wife, and three children,) he alone being the earning member, we may take one rupee and four annas to cover his monthly expenses on account of food for the whole family. An average unskilled labourer, like a water-carrier, in Akbar's time would earn one rupee and

fourteen annas per month. Thus he would have left a margin of ten annas to spend on clothing and luxuries,—a large amount considering the purchasing power of the rupee at the time."

Now I put it to you, gentlemen, is it possible for an ordinary labourer in this nineteenth century under the protection of British rule and enjoying the blessings of British administration—is it possible for him to lay by even ten annas of the present currency as a reserve against bad times? And yet the British Government plumes itself upon being the champion of the interests of the toiling masses of India and will not allow us to represent them or say one word on their behalf. What becomes of this boasted vaunt by the light of the facts I have read to you? This poverty was inevitable, for we know that our industries have all been extinguished. We are told sometimes by sympathising friends in a somewhat patronising way that ours is an agricultural country. I should like to ask our friends this question.—Did the English and the French, the Dutch and the Portuguese come here in the last century for our raw produce, or for our manufactured goods—our silks, our muslins, our shawls, our brass utensils? What has become of them? Vanished into the inane—they have disappeared into thin air. England has done great things for India, England has conferred upon us inestimable blessing for which we are truly grateful; but England is directly responsible for the collapse of our industries; England has made us industrially helpless. (cheers.) Ours rulers profess to be free traders. It is free trade when it suits their interests. It is protection when it benefits them. You know we export large quantities of our gold and silver manufactured articles to England. They levy a heavy duty upon the importation of those articles into England. Is this free trade? I think not. But when England exports the self-same articles into India no import duties are levied upon them! I am myself a free trader. The Liberal party I believe are wedded to the principles of free trade. There never was a greater advocate

of the doctrines of free trade than John Stuart Mill, and what does he say with reference to the development of the nascent industries of a 'country? He lays down the principles that the infant industries of a country must be safeguarded by protective duties. Of course you pay a great deal for the time being but the prosperity and material wealth which follow in the train of industries thus fostered and developed will more than compensate for the temporary loss you might thus incur. If India was a self-governing country I have not the slightest doubt that we should have imposed heavy duties for the protection of our nascent industries.

Gentlemen, I do not know that I should be justified in taking up more of your time. You say in this resolution—and I re-echo your sentiments—that the Government should husband the resources of the country. Economy and retrenchment have been the watch-wards of the Congress ; but hitherto ours has been a voice crying in the wilderness. It is now to be hoped—thanks to the labours of the Royal Commission—that economy will form a prominent feature of the administrations. I desire to remind the Government, in the presence of this great famine, of its supreme duty to husband the resources of the country. It is a serious obligation imposed upon the Government—an obligation rendered paramount by the consideration that these famines are due to the policy of extravagance followed by the Government in the past. No Government not even the strongest or the most omnipotent can for any length of time defy or break with impunity the moral and economic laws that govern human affairs. Injustice never wanders far, but comes home to the perpetrators thereof. But I must say I have great confidence in the Government of India ; in its wisdom and in its sense of justice. The Government is slow to move, but when it does move, it moves along the lines of beneficence and progress. You know the difficulties of the Irish problem ; you know how those difficulties arose. The words "to late" are written upon every line of England's policy in relation to

Ireland. Let not those words be inscribed on the portals of Government House in Calcutta. These famines are the reminders of nature to warn governments to mend their ways. If they do not mend direful must be the consequence. Bankruptcy, financial ruin, irretrievable collapse and all their attendant evil must follow. We in the Congress are the unofficial advisers of the Government. We appeal to Government to protect our industries ; husband our resources so that these famines may become matters of the past and a new era of plenty and prosperity may dawn upon this land. A Government which helps to produce a consumption so devoutly to be wished for will be entitled to the blessings of God and the gratitude of a nation (Loud and prolonged cheering.)

## BABU SURENDRANATH BANERJEA'S REPLY TO MR. JACOB'S STATEMENT. THE PUBLIC SERVICES

I desire to submit the following observations in connection with that part of Mr. Jacob's statement dated the 21st July (1907) which affects the Services :—

I note that Mr. Jacob does not call in question the facts and figures which the other Indian witnesses and myself have adduced. His contention is that much has been done within the last 20 years, and more will be done within the next few years. Our contention is that although ten years have elapsed since the Public Service Commission have made their report, yet in several important departments, such as the Public Works, the Forest, the Telegraph, the Post Office, the Survey, the Customs, the Opium, and the Police very little progress has been made towards giving effect to the recommendations of the Commission, and no serious effort has been made in that direction. With Mr. Jacob's criticisms as affecting each of these departments, I will deal in detail under their respective heads. But when he refers to the

statement which I made, and from which I do not withdraw, viz, that we regard the Indian Government as a progressive Government, but that we do not consider the progress made as adequate to meet the requirements of the country, it is only right and proper that I should point out that the statement is to be taken only in a general sense, and applicable to each department ; for there are departments in which instead of progress there has been retrogression as regards the employment of the people of the country in the highest offices. Take for instance the Medical Department, in regard to which Mr. Jacob is discreetly silent. In this department, within the last twenty years our countrymen have lost ground. I will reproduce here an extract from my evidence which entirely bears out this view of the matter and which has been challenged by Mr. Jacob :—

In 1877 there were 67 commissioned medical officers of whom 5 were Indians. There were in addition to the above, 28 uncovenanted medical officers. Of these 7 were apothecaries (all Europeans) and 3 were Indians. In 1887 there were 62 commissioned medical officers, of whom only 6 were Indians. There were 29 uncovenanted medical officers of whom only 4 were natives of India, the other 25 were Europeans and Eurasians (13 apothecaries and 12 non-military medical-men). There were 142 Assistant Surgeons. In 1897 there were 66 commissioned medical officers of whom only 4 were Indians. Thus practically the number of commissioned officers on the Bengal establishment who were natives of India remained stationary for a period extending over 20 years from 1877 to 1897. In fact the number in 1897 was slightly less. In 1897 there were 36 unconvenanted civil medical officers, of whom only 4 were Indians, the rest were Europeans and Eurasians, 25 were apothecaries and 7 non-military Europeans. \* \* \* It will thus be seen that while the number of apothecaries holding the higher appointments has increased by over 300 per cent, the number of natives of India employed has actually decreased.

It is also worthy of note that Mr. Jacob has nothing to say with regard to the Customs Department, although it so happens that with one exception the superior appointments in the Customs Department in Calcutta are filled by Europeans, and it is a department for which according to the testimony of Sir Charles Trevelyan, natives of India are specially qualified.

#### THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION REPORT.

As I have said our complaint is that in regard to several of the great departments of the State little or nothing has been done towards giving effect to the recommendations of the Public Service Commission. Mr. Jacob's explanation is that we have to wait for vacancies occurring. I cannot admit that this is a full explanation. Vacancies have occurred in the office of Under-Secretary to the Government in Bengal more than once; yet not a single native of India has ever been appointed Under-Secretary to Government, although in Sir Eshley Eden's time (1877-1882) a Bengali gentleman (Babu Rajendranath Mitter) acted with credit as Assistant Secretary to Government. Vacancies have more than once occurred in the office of Accountant-General of Bengal, yet not a single native of India has been appointed Account-General, although there are several natives of India who have acted with credit as Deputy Comptrollers General and Deputy Accountants-General. Both these are appointments to which natives of India under the recommendations of the Public Service Commission are eligible. A reduction in the number of new recruits every year would tend to the more speedy carrying out of the proposals of the Public Service Commission. I may here notice that in Bengal, with one exception (that of Mr. U. C. Batabyal) not a single member of the Provincial Service has been appointed under the recommendations of the Public Service Commission to any office hitherto reserved for members of the Covenanted Service, and even Mr. Batabyal is not really a member of the Provincial Service. He was a member of the Statutory



Service, but elected to belong to the Provincial Service. I more than once called attention to this matter in Council, and I was told in reply that the prior claims of the Statutory Service must first be satisfied, before the claims of the Provincial Service can be dealt with. In the North-Western Provinces however, where they had a Statutory Service similar to what we had in Bengal, several members of the Provincial Service hold appointments hitherto reserved for the Civil Service. Why the members of the Provincial Service in Bengal should be placed in a worse position is what I cannot understand. And here I must refer to an inaccuracy in Mr. Jacob's statement of a sufficiently important character to call for notice. At page 23 in commenting upon his table, Mr. Jacob's remarks :—" Besides the appointments shown above are actually listed for the Provincial Service, members of that Service are eligible for higher posts such as High Court Judgeships, Commissionerships and those of members of the Board of Revenue." Membership of the Board of Revenue is one of the highest executive appointments under the Government. It is only next in importance to a Lieutenant-Governorship, carrying a higher salary than that of a High Court Judge. (In Bengal the salary is 50,000 Rs. a year.) Now it is not the case, as stated by Mr. Jacob, that a membership of the Board of Revenue is one of the offices to which a member of the Provincial Service is eligible. The Public Service Commission indeed made the recommendation but the Government of India declined to accept this part of the recommendation of the Commission, and Sir Andrew Scoble, a member of the Commission, was a member of that Government. I quote from paragraph 13 of the despatch of the Government of India (No 58 of 1888 dated Simla the 9th October 1888):

"In the first place we are of opinion that it is not advisable to exclude from the schedule one member of the Board of Revenue in Madras, Bengal, and the N. W. Provinces and Oudh, and the Financial Commissioner of the

Punjab. From our views upon this point our Hon'ble colleague Sir Charles Aitchison desires to dissent, for the reasons given on page 74 of the Report."

**"THE BULK OF THE EXECUTIVE AND JUDICIAL  
DEPARTMENTS MUST BE ENGLISHMEN."**

Mr. Jacob labours, as it seems to me, under a more serious misapprehension when he says that the Public Service Commission laid great stress upon the fact that "the bulk of the Executive and Judicial Departments must be Englishmen" trained in English principles. This is certainly not the recommendation of the Public Service Commission. The gist of their recommendations may be summarized as follows :

That indigenous agency should be more largely employed in the public service, that the recoupment of the official staff in England should be curtailed and advantage taken of qualified agency obtainable in India. In other words, the Provincial Service recruited in India should be the backbone of the administrative agency, subject to European supervision and control. "Considerations of policy and economy alike require," observed the Commission in their Report, "that so far as is consistent with the ends of good Government, the recruitment of the official staff in England should be curtailed and advantage taken of qualified agency obtainable in India."

Again when discussing their proposals regarding the formation of an Imperial Service, the Commission observe :—  
"Under this arrangement the Covenanted Civil Service reduced to a *corps d'elite* and its members limited to what is necessary to fill the chief administrative appointments of the Government and such a number of smaller appointments as will ensure a complete course of training for junior civilians, will continue as hitherto to be recruited by open competition in England only" &c. (page 68 of the Public Service Commission Report). Thus so far from lying stress upon the fact that "the bulk of the Executive and Judicial

Departments must be Englishmen," the Public Service Commission recommend "the limiting of the recruitment in England to such a strength as is required to fill the highest and even the upper ranks of the service," so that "an opportunity of advancement to places of trust and responsibility is afforded to those whose scruples debar them from competition in England") page 50, Public Service Commission Report). The Commission did not indeed recommend that the bulk of Executive and Judicial appointments should be held by Englishmen. Their recommendations involved the reservation of about one-sixth of the appointments hitherto held exclusively by members of the Civil Service for the Provincial Service ; and my contention is that in the executive and judicial departments, the ruling departments as Mr. Jacob puts it, their recommendations have only been partially carried out, and in the special departments to which I shall presently refer, they have been, if not totally ignored, even less partially given effect to.

#### • THE SPECIAL DEPARTMENTS.

And yet in connection with these Special Departments Mr. Jacob observes in his evidence:—"Of course in other Departments which are not concerned with the Government of the country you may say such as the Public Works Department and the Accounts Department and others, a very much larger proportion of natives can be employed even in the higher grades and will be so employed." As a matter of fact they are not so employed. As a matter of fact the exclusion of natives of India from the higher offices in the special departments (as I have already shown from the figures I have quoted in my evidence) is even more complete. The House of Commons in their Resolution of the 2nd June 1893 laid down:—"That all open competitive examinations heretofore held in England alone for appointments to the Civil Services of India shall henceforth be held simultaneously both in India and England, such examinations in both countries being identical in their nature and all who

compete being finally classed in one list according to merit." It will thus be seen that the House of Commons by the above Resolution affirmed the principle of holding simultaneous examinations, not only with regard to the Indian Civil Service, but with regard to all Civil Services. The Examinations for the higher offices in the Forest service, the Telegraph service, the Public Works Department, the Police Department are now held in England and in England alone. Whatever political reasons there may exist for not holding simultaneous examinations for the Indian Civil Service (and Indian public opinion firmly holds that no such reasons exist) it cannot be urged with the shadow of a reason that there are any political grounds for not holding simultaneous examinations for recruitment to the higher offices in the special departments. It will be seen on a reference to the "Blue-book presented to both Houses of Parliament in 1894, containing papers relating to the question of holding simultaneous examinations in India and England" that these despatches deal exclusively with the question of holding simultaneous examinations for the Indian Civil Service, and that not a single Local Government nor even the Supreme Government recorded any opinion adverse to the proposal for holding simultaneous examinations for the minor Civil Services. There is no official opinion on record against it. There is the Resolution of the House of Commons in favour of it. There are no political considerations against it. Mr. Jacob, the mouth-piece of the Government, himself says that natives of India can and will be largely employed in these departments. Under the circumstances I would respectfully press the view which I have ventured to put forward in favour of holding simultaneous examinations in India and England for recruitment to the Special Departments, for the favourable consideration of the Commission. There can be no practical difficulty in the way of holding such examinations. For the London University till recently held its examinations in Calcutta, Bombay and other centres. In his Budget speech

Lord George Hamilton referred to the necessity of encouraging technical education in India, as a means of developing the wealth of the country and of ameliorating the poverty of the masses. I have no hesitation in saying that the holding of examinations in India for the selection of probationers for the special departments which require technical knowledge will give a great impetus to technical education in India. The colleges will then make arrangements for these examinations. The youth of the country will be drawn by the prospect of high office towards the study of those technical sciences necessary for these examinations.

I now pass on to consider Mr. Jacob's observations under each special department.

#### OPIUM DEPARTMENT

It would seem from Mr. Jacob's statement that the Government of India has declined to accept the recommendation of the Public Service Commission in favour of the adoption of "the principle of equality of treatment of all classes of Her Majesty's subjects in regard to their appointment to offices in this department," the reason assigned being that natives have so recently been introduced into the higher appointments in the Opium Department that it is not deemed advisable at present to increase their employment. Natives of India have been employed in the higher appointments in this Department since 1886. Thus for more than ten years their fitness has been tried, and surely the Government ought to be in a position to say whether they are qualified or not for the higher offices in this department. But surely if natives of India have been found qualified for some of the highest executive and judicial offices (such as those of District Magistrate, High Court Judge) it would be almost too absurd to hold that they cannot be trusted to discharge with ability the duties of some of the higher appointments in the Opium Department. After all, what does the recommendation of the Public Service Commissioner come up

to? Equality of treatment among all classes of Her Majesty's subjects is what they advocate. In other words, natives of India shall be placed on the same footing with Europeans and Eurasians if they have the requisite qualifications—that their race shall be no bar to their employment in the higher offices in the Opium Department. Let the Government of India fix the qualifications, intellectual, moral and physical, and let all be equally allowed to compete, irrespective of race. That is obviously the sense of the Public Service Commission recommendation, but apparently the Government of India would keep up the present state of things, make race a disqualification, and would on no account allow more than one out of the four yearly recruits to be a native of India. The Government of India would find it very difficult to justify this policy before public opinion. In this Department alone, the recommendations of the Public Service Commission have been bodily rejected by the Government of India, for reasons with which the public are unacquainted.

#### FOREST SERVICE

Ten years ago the Public Service Commission recommended the formation of a Provincial Service in connection with the Forest Department—the Imperial branch of the Forest Service being in the words of the Public Service Commission “limited to the number of officers necessary to fill the superior controlling appointments and such proportion of the Assistant Conservators' posts as will ensure a complete training of the junior officers” It will thus be seen that the Provincial Service was to be the back-bone of forest administration. Ten years have now elapsed, and yet the Provincial Branch which is to play such an important part in the arrangements for the wider employment of the children of the soil in the forest Department has not yet been formed. The Indian public have a right to complain that it has not yet been formed ; but so it is with regard to most schemes for the wider employment of the people in the higher offices of state.

We do not know when this Provincial branch of the Forest Service will be formed. We have waited ten years, and we do not know how long we will have to wait. All this is in corroboration of my remark that the Government of India ought to move much faster than it does. If I may be permitted to say so without disrespect, I will venture to add that Mr. Jacob's remarks under this and other heads of the Public Services are made not so much in respect of things as they are, but in respect of things as they will be. They are undertakings given on behalf of the Government. I am bound to say that we have had painful experience of these promises in the past. The Duke of Argyle speaking as Secretary of State observed:—"We have not kept on promises to the people of India." Lord Lytton speaking as Viceroy of India observed:—"The promises of the Queen (as contained in the Proclamation) remain inadequately redeemed." The Indian public can only hope that Mr. Jacob's promises made on behalf of the Government will be more speedily realized.

#### POSTAL DEPARTMENT

In regard to the Postal Department, Mr. Jacob's observations apply to what will happen eventually. The gist of my contention is not assailed, *viz.*, that notwithstanding the orders of the Government of India of 1879 and the distinct finding of the Public Service Commission that "in this Department opportunities have been afforded to natives to show their fitness for superior offices and for posts of the highest responsibility"—the bulk of the higher appointments in the Department are still held by Europeans. I need not repeat the figures which I have already given and which entirely bear out my position.

#### POLICE

In the Indian Civil Service somewhat less than one-sixth or 16 per cent. of the appointments are held by natives of India. In the Police in Bengal less than

7 per cent. of the superior appointments are held by natives ; and the Civil Service governs the country. The District Magistrate who is a member of the Civil Service, governs the country ; the District Magistrate who is a member of the Civil Service controls the District Superintendent, the official head of the District Police. Mr. Jacob admits the irritating and invidious distinction to which I called attention in my evidence, viz, that from the competitive examinations held in London for recruitment to the higher offices in the Police, natives of India are excluded, for no other reason than because they are natives. Their race constitutes their disability, contrary to the clear and distinct pledges contained in the Queen's Proclamation, which laid down that merit and not race was to be the sole test of qualification. Mr. Jacob says that the Local Governments are free to promote native Inspectors to the higher ranks in the Police service. I protested against one system of appointing old and worn-out Inspectors as District Superintendents of Police. I desire respectfully to renew my protest. The circumstance has a bearing upon the advancement of natives of India in the Police service which is not to be overlooked. Under the 55 years' rule, every unconvenated servant of Government must retire from service at the age of 55, unless extension is given to him. Such extension is ordinarily given for once, and seldom exceeds five years. The result of these old men being promoted to the office of District Superintendent is that they never rise to the higher grades. The system has thus contributed to keep the native District Superintendents in the lower grades. Promoted for the most part by seniority, there has not been a single native of India who has ever been a first grade District Superintendent of Police in Bengal. The present system of recruitment therefore distinctly interferes with the advancement of natives of India to the higher grades in the Police department.



## THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

I desire in the first instance to correct a mistake of fact in Mr. Jacob's statement. Mr. Jacob says that under the scheme now introduced the local recruitment for Bengal will come up to 113, representing an advance of 13 upon the existing number which as given in his table is 100. As a matter of fact the permanent local recruitment under the new scheme will be 104, and not 113, as stated by Mr. Jacob. 113 is the number fixed temporarily and on personal grounds. Let me quote from the supplement to the *Calcutta Gazette* of March 27th, 1897, which contains the Resolution of Government on the Reorganization of the superior service of the Education Department (page 1182):—

“The inclusion in the Provincial Service on personal grounds of nine other officers has received the sanction of the Secretary of State and the number in that service was in this way to be brought up *temporarily* to 113.”

I have italicized the word temporarily. Mr. Jacob seems to indicate that in Bengal under the new scheme an addition will be made to the local recruitment, suggesting a wider employment of the people of this country. Nothing could be further from the actual facts of the case. I desire to call the attention of the Commission to the Bengal Civil List for January 1897. I take this Civil List as the one which was current at the time when the new education scheme was framed. At page 177 there is a list of officers (belonging to the Education Department) not within the classified list. Now the additions to the Provincial Service and also I may add to the Indian Educational Service (which is the highest educational service) have been made by the classification for the first time of these officers—some in the Indian Educational and others in the Provincial Service—and also by the election of some members of the Bengal Educational Service (now the Indian Educational Service) to serve in the Provincial Service. Let me state the facts. Rai Radhika Prasanna Mukerjee Bahadur and Rai Shahib Dinanath

Sen (Inspectors of schools) who in the Civil List are put down in the fourth class of the Bengal Educational Service (page 176) have been elected to serve in the newly-organized Provincial Service and figure in the first class of that service (see page 1191 of the Supplement to the *Calcutta Gazette* of the 27th March 1897). Then again Messrs. Tate, Gilhardi, Annada Prasad Bagchi, Shaw, Stark, Hara Prasad Sastri, Prafulla Chandra Roy, Jogendranath Das Gupta, Debendra Nath Mallick, Purnananda Chatterjea, Manomohan Ghose, Kumidini Kanta Banerjea, Holland and Byers who were not within the classified list (see page 127 Bengal Civil List for January 1897) have now for the first time been brought within the classes of the Provincial Service. They were already in Government service. A Provincial Service having now for the first time been created in connection with the Education Department, they have been graded in the service—Mr. Tate has the sixth place given to him in the 3rd class of the new Provincial Service ; Mr. Ghilardi, Dr. P. C. Roy and Mr. J. N. Dass Gupta have the 6th, 7th, and 8th places given to them in the 4th classes of the Provincial Service ; Messrs. Shastri, Stark and Mullick occupy the 8th, 9th and 10th places in the 5th class ; Dr. Purnananda Chatterjee, Mr. Kumadini Kanta Banerjea and Mr. Manomohan Ghose are in the sixth class of the Provincial Service, while Mr. Byers heads the 7th class of the Provincial Service. (see pages 1192 and 1193 of the Supplement to the *Calcutta Gazette* of the 27th March 1897.) It will thus be seen that no real addition has been made to the Provincial Service in Bengal in the sense that it affords a wider employment to the people of the country ; and the fact remains that the service as organized in regard to its lower grades has elicited a strong protest from the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Alexander Mackenzie, to which I have already referred in my evidence.

While there has been no addition to the Provincial Service, the rules practically preclude the admission of natives of India into the superior grade of the service. I need not

repeat the reasons which as I think irresistibly point to this conclusion. Mr. Jacob's statement does not traverse that view of the matter. What he practically says is this—natives of India may be excluded from the higher grade, but they have a wider opening in the Provincial Service. This last position, I have just shewn, is untenable. Thus the new educational scheme instead of being an advantage must seriously interfere with the prospects of natives of India in regard to their employment in the highest grades of the educational service from which they will now be practically excluded.

#### PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

In dealing with the Public Works Department Mr. Jacob quotes a table at page 29 of his evidence which represents the ultimate distribution of the superior grades of the Department in accordance with the Public Works Despatch No. 65 dated the 22nd October 1890. Under this arrangement there will eventually be 730 engineers representing the full strength of the superior grades of the Public Works Department. Out of the 730 engineers, 130 will be royal engineers, 300 will be European civil engineer and 300 Indian civil engineers. Our complaint is that we are as yet very far from this consummation, and little or no progress has been made within the ten years since the submission of the Report of the Public Service Commission. At the time when the Public Service Commission reported, out of 1015 officers in the superior engineering establishment so many as 810 were non-domiciled Europeans, 119 Europeans domiciled in India including Eurasians, and only 86 were natives of India ! At present there are 800 engineers of the superior establishment of whom only 96 are Indians. In ten years the number of Indians has risen from 86 to 96 ; in how many year will the number rise to 300, the maximum to be reached under the Government scheme ? In this connection I desire to call attention to the new rules which have been issued by the authorities of the Thomson Civil Engineering College at

Rurki in the North-Western Provinces. The Rurki College is perhaps the greatest institution in the country for the training of engineers. Hitherto all natives of India as defined by statute were eligible to the guaranteed appointments of the college. Under the new rules issued in 1897, all natives of India except natives of the Punjab and of the North-Western Provinces where the College is situated are excluded from competing for these appointments. These appointments are now reserved for Europeans and Eurasians and for such natives of the North-Western Provinces and the Punjab as may qualify themselves for them. A Eurasian born in Bengal or the son of European parents born in Bengal may compete for these guaranteed appointments, but the Hindu and Mahomedan youth of Bengal the Indian subjects of Her Majesty in the Province, are precluded from this privilege. While Mr. Jacob gives an undertaking before the Commission on behalf of the Government for the wider employment of the people in the higher offices in the Public Works Department, the authorities of the most important engineering institution in India establish a disqualification on the ground of race against the vast majority of the native population in India, and would exclude them from competing for some of these high appointments. I place side by side for comparison the rules for 1896 and the new rules for 1897 to enable the Commission to form their own inferences :

#### Rules for 1896

1. Candidates for admission to this Class must be Statutory Natives of India, and not under 17 or above 21 years of age at date of entry to College. No Candidate will be examined more than twice, and no one who has studied for more than three months in any Class of the

#### Rules for 1897

1 Candidates for admission to this Class through the Entrance Examination must be Statutory Natives of India, other than Natives of pure Asiatic descent whose parents or guardians are domiciled in Bengal, Madras and Bombay, and must not be under 16 or above 21 years of age at date

College is eligible for admission as a Candidate for a Government appointment.

2. Candidates who have not passed the Entrance Examination may be admitted for education, and obtain certificates as Assistant Engineers, provided that (a) accommodation is available; (b) they possess the educational qualifications specified in rule 7, can produce the certificates specified in rules 4 and 5 and can satisfy the Principal that their knowledge of English is sufficient to enable them to pass through the College Course; (c) they pay a fee to be fixed by the Committee of Management so as not to exceed Rs. 100 per mensem. If, in addition, they conform to the age limits laid down in rule 1, they may compete for the guaranteed appointments. No Scholarships will be paid to these students.

of entry to College. No Candidate will be examined more than twice, and no one who has studied for more than three months in any Class of the College is eligible for admission as a Candidate for a Government appointment.

2. Candidates, including Natives of pure Asiatic descent whose parents or guardians are domiciled in Bengal, Madras, and Bombay, may be admitted without the Entrance Examination for purposes of education, and to obtain certificates as Assistant Engineers, provided that (a) accommodation is available; (b) they possess the educational qualifications specified in rule 8, can produce the certificates specified in rules 5 and 6, can satisfy the Principal that their knowledge of English is sufficient to enable them to pass through the College Course; and (c) that they pay a fee of Rs. 40 per mensem during the Session. If, in addition they conform to the age limits laid down in rule I, and are Statutory Natives of India, they may compete for the second and third year's Scholarships, *vide* rule II, and if not Natives

*of pure Asiatic descent whose parents and guardians are domiciled in Bengal, Madras and Bombay, they may also compete for the guaranteed appointments.*

#### TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT

With reference to the Telegraph Department Mr. Jacob says that the recruitment is so arranged that three-sevenths of the Department will eventually belong to the Provincial Service. The total strength of the service, being 84, the distribution will eventually be 48 Imperial, and 36 Provincial Service. As a matter of fact as I have already pointed out there are only two Indians in this superior grade ; and in how many years will the 2 rise to 36? The Public Service Commission recommended ten years ago the gradual reduction of the staff recruited in England and the recruitment of a superior Local Telegraph Service in India from classes established at one or more the Indian Engineering Colleges. This has not been done. I desire to call attention to the fact that Mr. Jacob has not given a single word of explanation with regard to the invidious and irritating distinction between Indian, European and Eurasian telegraph-masters and signallers in the matter of house-allowance which is given to Europeans and Eurasians, but is withheld from natives of India.

#### MR. JACOB'S TABLE

Mr. Jacob sets out a table at page 31 of his evidence with a view to show that within the last 20 years the employment of natives of India in the higher offices has steadily increased. For facility of reference I produce the table in this place :

	1877 April 1st.			1887 April 1st.			1897 April 1st.		
	Bengal, N. W. P., Punjab and Central Provinces.	Madras and Bombay	Total	Bengal N. W. P., Punjab and C. P.	Madras and Bombay.	Total	Bengal N. W. P. Punjab and C. P.	Madras and Bombay.	Total
Above Rs. 2,000	1	...	...	3	3	6	11		16
From Rs. 1,500 to below Rs. 2,000	...	...	...	4	2	6	4	1	5
From Rs. 1,000 to below Rs. 1,500	7	...	...	19	8	27	33	25	58
From Rs. 750 to below Rs. 1,000	28	...	...	46	16	62	62	36	98
From Rs. 500 to below Rs. 750	121	...	...	221	100	321	243	112	355
From Rs. 250 to below Rs. 500	595	...	...	868	339	1,207	1,132	446	1,578
	752	...	752	1,161	468	1,629	1,485	625	2,110

*It will be seen that in 1877, in 1887 and again in 1897, the bulk of the increase has taken place in respect of the lowest grade of appointments carrying salaries from Rs. 250 a month to below Rs. 500 a month. In 1877 out of a total of 752 appointments, 595 were appointments of this class, in 1887 out of 1629, 1207 were appointments of this class, and in 1897, out of 2110 appointments, no less than 1578 were appointments of this class. If we take the scale just above the lowest and add it to the lowest grade, the paucity of the higher appointments held by natives of India will be still more remarkable. It will be seen that in 1877 out 752 appointments, no less than 716 appointments carried salaries from Rs. 250 to below Rs. 750 a month, in 1887 out of 1629 appointments no less than 1528 appointments were of this class ; and in 1897 out of 2110 appointments no less than 1893 appointments carried salaries varying from Rs. 250 to below Rs. 750. In 1897 we find 16 appointments carrying salaries of over Rs. 2,000. The matter admits of an easy explanation. There are nine Indian Judges of the High Court all over India, and they draw salaries of over two thousand rupees a month. The increase which has taken place in the two lowest grades has been largely due to the wider employment of natives of India in the subordinate judicial and executive services owing to the growing administrative needs of the country. In Bengal the number of Munsiffs, (Civil Judges of the first instance) have increased from 262 in 1890 to 289 in 1893 and a further increase in their number took place in 1894 (vide Bengal Council Proceedings for 1895 page. 185). There is not a single European or Eurasian in the Judicial Branch of the Provincial Service in Bengal, for the simple reason that no qualified European would serve as a munsiff, the lowest appointment in the service, on the pay of a munsiff which is Rs. 250 a month. That I am right in this view of the matter, viz that the bulk of the increase has taken place in the subordinate judicial and executive services will appear from some figures which appear in the Public Service*



Commission Report to which I desire to call attention. It would appear that the grand total of the executive and judicial services, (the subordinate judicial and executive services are referred to) at the time when the Public Service Commission reported, was 2588, out of which 2449 were natives of India—only 139 were Europeans and Eurasians (page 97 Report of the Public Service Commission). Now the grand total for 1897 in Mr. Jacob's table is 2110. This total must include all appointments in the judicial and executive services carrying salaries of Rs. 250 a month and upwards. The bulk of appointments in the judicial and executive services carry salaries of Rs. 250 a month and upwards. It would therefore follow that there would be a very large number of appointments in these services in Mr. Jacob's total, and that there would be a small percentage of appointments in other departments. Even in regard to the offices in the judicial and executive services, I have shewn in my evidence that the recommendations of the Public Service Commission have not yet been given effect to though ten years have elapsed since the Commission have made their report.

As regards the minor Civil Services, Mr. Jacob does not meet the allegation which has been made, viz., that there are whole departments from the higher offices of which natives of India are practically excluded. When the complaint is made that the natives of India are excluded from the more responsible offices in the Survey Department, the Customs, the Opium Department, the Forest Department, the Police, or the Telegraph Department, it is no answer to say that a large number of offices are held by them in the Subordinate Judicial and Executive Services. When again it is urged that the recommendations of the Public Service Commission have not been given effect to in regard to these great departments, the objection is not met by saying that in connection with the Subordinate Judicial and Executive Services these recommendations have to some extent been complied with. When Mr. Jacob analyses the figures, showing the rate of

increase of appointments given to Indians under the scales of salaries take by him, he does not show the departments where that increase has taken place. If he did so, the progress made or the want of all progress would be demonstrated. It was in his power to have made this detailed analysis. That he did not do so must create a presumption against this view of the matter, and must weaken the effect of his vindication. If he did so, I am sure it would be seen that there are whole departments where natives of India have not been employed on a larger scale than before, that indeed there are departments where natives of India have lost ground, where a lesser number of them are now employed in the higher offices than they were employed twenty years ago. I have already referred to Mr. Jacob's silence about the Medical Department. I have analysed the figures of this Department and have shewn that a lesser number of natives of India are now employed in the higher offices in this Department. There is no lack of qualified natives of India in this Department; but there is a growing unwillingness on the part of the Government to employ them in high office. I may here mention only one instance. Surgeon Lt. Col. R. L. Dutt, M. D. (Lond) now Civil Surgeon of Hughli twice officiated as Professor in the Medical College of Calcutta (a Professorship in the Medical College is considered a prize appointment.) On the office in which he has twice officiated becoming permanently vacant, his claims were overlooked, and an English medical man was appointed.

#### CONCLUSION.

In concluding his evidence Mr. Jacob observes —

“ I may perhaps add, with reference to the Chairman's remark, that there are several criticisms that might be made on the evidence of Mr. Banerjea and Mr. Ayer, but I have not submitted a formal note about them, because most of the points have been covered by the general evidence which I have given on the working of the provincial contract system, and the employment of natives in the public service. There

are a few other cases in which their figures are incorrect, but I do not think it is necessary to point them out in detail."

None of us can claim to be free from mistakes, especially in regard to matters pertaining to the administration where the sources of information are official. Even Mr. Jacob with all the sources of official information behind him, is not above committing mistakes. When Mr. Jacob comes to enlighten the Commission about the employment of Indians in the public service, he ought to have known that the important office of a member of the Board of Revenue is not open to the Provincial Service—that the Public Service Commission did not recommend that the bulk of executive and judicial appointments should be held by Englishmen. A little examination would also have shewn him that in the reorganized educational scheme for Bengal, the Provincial Service does not make a permanent provision for the number of appointments (113) that he sets down and that it has not created fresh appointments for natives of India. When I urge that the Provincial Governments are starved in the matter of domestic improvements and that the bulk of the revenue is spent upon imperial expenditure, all that Mr. Jacob says in reply is that the percentage of increase of provincial expenditure is higher than the percentage of imperial expenditure exclusive of exchange, and that as much is given to the Provincial Governments as the funds would allow. The question of the percentage in the growth of provincial expenditure was a matter about which I was questioned by the chairman. My answer then is the answer which I now give. Without disputing the growth in provincial expenditure, I maintained that it was wholly inadequate for the purposes for which the revenue was assigned, and in the view I am supported by the opinions of the responsible heads of the administrations. With the permission of the Commission I will reproduce this part of my examination :—

Chairman.—And what I call your attention to is that there has been such an increase, which it may be quite possible

for you to show is utterly inadequate, but still where is that increase?—I do not dispute the fact of the increase; even in Bengal, in 1892; 93, the provincial share was 4 crores 16 lakhs, it is now 4 crores 54 lakhs. I do not dispute the fact of the increase, but what I do contend for is that the increase has not been adequate to the wants of the province.

When Mr. Jacob speaks of “a few other cases in which my figures are incorrect,” it is only due to us that he should have specified those cases. This he has not done. I do not indeed find in Mr. Jacob's statement which has been sent to us that he has challenged any of my figures. He has sought to draw conclusions, favourable to the view which he supports, upon the basis of figures supplied by himself. I have not been favoured with a copy of his appendix.

#### AMRAOTI CONGRESS, 1897.

The Hon'ble Babu Surendranath Banerjea said in proposing Mr. Sankaran Nair as President of the Amraoti Congress.

“Chairman of the Reception Committee, Brother Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,—I rise to lay before you a motion which I am sure will meet with your unanimous and enthusiastic acceptance. I have the honour to propose “that this Congress do elect the Hon'ble Mr. Sankaran Nair as President of the Congress.” (Applause.) Madras now gives us the second President, Bombay has given us three Presidents, Bengal has given us two, Madras has given us one. Madras now comes up to the standard of Bengal. We have very arduous duties before us. There is no mistake that we stand face to face with one of the greatest crises which have developed themselves in the history of this country. We are at the parting of the waves. Our rulers, after having pursued a career of beneficence for more than half a century, seem all on a sudden to be staggered at the

marvellous success of their own work. They pause, they hesitate, they linger, they would fain go back. At such a crisis we need careful and wise statesman-like guidance and I feel convinced that you will have such guidance from our honourable and distinguished friend Mr. Sankaran Nair. He is a prominent leader of the great community to which he belongs, one of the foremost citizens of Madras, an honoured and illustrious leader of the Congress movement. I feel perfectly confident that with your assistance he will do the amplest justice to that great office to which he has been called, the greatest to which a native of India can aspire (Cheers), dependent as that office is upon the love, respect, the esteem and the gratitude of his countrymen. (Cheers). I do not know that I should be doing justice to myself or to ourselves if I am to stand further between the Presidential chair and this assembly. With these words I propose the name of Mr. Sankaran Nair as the President of this Congress.

### THIRD DAY.

The Hon'ble Babu S. N. Banerjea said :—

Mr. President, Brother Delegates, Ladies and gentlemen, I have the honour to move the following resolution :—

“That this Congress respectfully deprecates the exercise by the Government of the extraordinary powers vested in them by Bengal Regulation III of 1818, Madras Regulation II of 1819, and Bombay Regulation XXV of 1827 at a time of peace and quiet, and submits that such powers should be exercised only under such limitations as will ensure their being put in force with the utmost circumspection and ease and under a sense of the highest responsibility by the Government.

“(a) This Congress therefore urges that none of these regulations should be put into force except after notification by the Local Government concerned that the circumstances contemplated by the preamble of Regulation exist in its

Province or in some definite area within the Province, and that it intends, if necessary, to exercise the powers vested in it ; and further that in no case should such powers extend to keeping a person arrested under them in custody for a period longer than three months without his being brought to trial before a Court of Justice.

“(b) That this Congress while feeling that the Government of Bombay must have acted under a sense of responsibility, in arresting the sardars Natu under Bombay Regulation XXV of 1827, is yet of opinion, that, five months having now elapsed from such arrest, it is the duty of the Government, in the interests of justice, and also to allay the disquiet and uneasiness which has been created in the minds of the people at large by the arrest, to bring them—the sardars Natu—to trial without delay, or, if the Government have no sufficient evidence against them to place before a Court of Justice to release them.”

Sir, in speaking to this resolution it is impossible that I should not advert for a moment to that magnificent speech which you delivered from the chair, and to which we all listened with so much interest and for my part, with so much admiration. (Cheers) You were pleased to observe Sir, in the course of your presidential speech—and it is a remark so true, so pregnant, so aptly descriptive of the situation in which we find ourselves, that I thought it necessary to repeat it then and there, in the course of the observations which I addressed to this assembly in proposing you to the chair—in that speech, you, Sir, were pleased to remark that we have arduous duties before us. (Cheers.) Yes, Sir, there are solemn, grave, awful responsibilities imposed upon us by the exigencies of our present situation. (Hear, hear.) We meet to-day under circumstances of great difficulty and embarrassment. It seems as if the gods and men had combined against us, as if the portents of nature had entered into an unholy combination with the powers of men to pile misfortune upon misfortune upon us, until we have been driven to

the very verge of desperation. (Cheers.) Last year we were confronted with what was properly described as the greatest famine of the century. This year we have the plague instead which bids fair to assume the proportions of a great national calamity. But these are visitations of nature to which we all must submit. (Cheers.) On the top of all this, we have a retrograde and repressive policy inaugurated by the Government of the day. (Shame.) We stand face to face with one of the greatest crises in the history of this country. The other day I was reading the *Englishman* newspaper, and the writer made an observation in the course of a leading article which attracted my attention. He said that a wave of unrest was passing through the length and breadth of the country. More truly might it be said that a wave of reaction was sweeping across the high places of Government and was influencing the counsels of our rulers. (Hear, hear.) Our rulers have of late exhibited a marked tendency to make a departure from the ancient, the traditionary, the time-honoured policy of Anglo-Indian administration, a policy which has covered the Englishmen in India with imperishable renown and glory. (Cheers.) Let me take our rulers for a moment within the precincts of Parliament and invite them to listen to a debate which took place there in 1833—and let me whisper into their ears the words, the prophetic words, of one of the greatest Anglo-Indian administrators. (Cheers.) Macaulay, speaking from his place in Parliament in connection with the Charter Act of 1833 observed: "It may be that the public mind of India may so expand under our system as to outgrow that system and that our subjects being educated in western learning may crave for western institutions. I know not whether such a day will ever arrive, but when it does arrive, it will be the proudest day in the annals of England." (Cheers.) That very proud day has come. A succession of beneficent measures has hastened forward the advent of that day. I ask Englishmen to remember the traditions of their glorious history in India.

Englishmen have given us high English education. They have given us a free press. They have conferred upon us the great boon of local self-government, one of the most potent educational agencies at the present moment in operation, and last but not least they have enlarged the councils upon a representative basis. I see before me and there are within the sound of my voice representatives of that great community. I ask them whether they are prepared to stifle in us those ambitions which they have awakened in our breasts (hear, hear) and put back the clock of progress? Yet that is exactly the tendency of that policy which unfortunately has developed itself of recent years in the administration of India. The murder of two British officers, a tragedy which we all deplore (hear, hear)—the murder of these two officers has led to the inauguration of a policy which, I am sure, our rulers themselves must condemn when they have recovered from the present excitement and have resumed the even tenor of their minds. We, men of the Congress, are the friends of peace and orderly Government. (Hear, hear.) We denounce violence; we condemn violent methods; for we believe in our heart of hearts that order is the first condition of political progress. (Hear, hear.) We know that violence must lead to repression, to the strengthening of the hands of the executive Government, to the suspension of the reign of law. Could we persuade ourselves for one moment to believe that these extraordinary proceedings of the Government of Lord Sandhurst were necessary in the interests of orderly Government, we, men of the Congress, would have accorded to them our unqualified and unstinted support. (Cheers.) But we regard them as unnecessary and therefore unwise, as a source of embarrassment to the Government, and as dangerous to the liberty of the subjects. That is the view we take with regard to these proceedings of the Bombay Government. We consider the quartering of the punitive police at Poona as a mistake. We regard the imprisonment of Mr. Tilak (loud and continued applause and



“Hip, Hip, Hurrah” the audience standing to their feet ; and of the Poona editors as a still greater mistake. For Mr. Tilak my heart is full of sympathy. My feelings go forth to him in his prison home. (Cheers.) A nation is in tears. Speaking for myself,—speaking, I may add, for the Indian press, I have no hesitation in saying that we believe Mr. Tilak to be innocent of the charges brought against him. (Loud and continued cheers.) The ends of technical justice may have been satisfied, but the ends of substantial justice have grievously failed. It is impossible for a native of India to be disloyal. (Hear, hear.) It is impossible for a native of India of the attainments, the distinction and the unquestioned patriotism of Mr. Tilak (Loud and continued cheers) to harbour sentiments of disloyalty towards the British Government. We know that with the maintenance of the British Empire is bound up the fulfilment of our political hopes and aspirations. In our present situation, loyalty and patriotism are inseparably linked together. (Cheers.). The incarceration of the Natu Brothers was a still graver mistake. It is a proceeding which will be condemned by all British subjects, by all friends of liberty in all parts of the world. British subjects, no matter in what part of the world their lot may be cast, no matter under what particular form of Government they may live, whether they be the free citizens of our self-governing colonies or the voiceless subjects of unrepresented dependencies, have all a hereditary and traditionary interest in maintaining inviolate, free from encroachment of autocratic power, the invaluable possession of personal liberty which is the inalienable birth-right of British subjects and the indefeasible adjunct of British citizenship. Therefore, whenever violent hands are laid on that great right, the proceeding is calculated to send a thrill of horror throughout the length and breadth of the broad dominions of the Queen, which are linked together no less by common allegiance to a common sovereign than by the joint participation in the inestimable blessings of a great, free and noble constitution.

(Cheers). Gentlemen, the voice of protest, therefore, which we raise here to-day will elicit a sympathetic response from the heart of every true-born Briton and will be endorsed by the verdict of civilised mankind. Englishmen have won for themselves the *Magna Charta* and the *Habeas Corpus*. The principles which underlie those confessions are embalmed in their glorious constitution. The constitution, I have no hesitation in saying, is ours by birth-right ; (Cheers) born British subjects, we are entitled to the privileges of British subjects. Who will filch away these rights from us ? We are resolved and this Congress will take the pledge, you and I will enter into a solemn league and covenant. (Cheers) Let it go forth from this hall, let it impregnate the public mind of India, we are resolved by every constitutional means that may be available to us to assert under the providence of God (hear, hear) our right as British subjects, not the least important of which is the inestimable right of personal liberty. (Loud cheers) You, Sir, were pleased to say the other day that *civis Romanus sum* was the boast of the ancient world. *Civis Britannicus sum* is the distinction of the subjects of that Greater Britain to which we all belong. All English Governments, no matter in what part of the world they may be situated, are the offshoots, the emanations of that great constitution of which the *Habeas Corpus* and the *Magna Charta* are the key-stones. It was seriously contended by Mr. Anstey in the great Wahabi case which was tried by the High Court of Calcutta in 1870 that the Government of India acted *ultra vires* in enacting the Regulation III of 1818 and other cognate regulations. Sir, I am not a lawyer and in this galaxy of distinguished lawyers I do not propose to discuss this question. I take my stand upon a higher ground, upon the much stronger consideration of expediency and justice, which are superior to all legal technicalities. If the Government possessed the right of enacting Regulation III of 1818 assuming that they had the right, the question that I want you to consider with me is whether the

Government were wise, whether they were justified in arresting and detaining the Natu brothers. Well, Sir, at a very early stage of the case soon after the arrest of the Natu brothers, Mr. Michael Davitt put a question in the House of Commons (Cheers), I think I understand the significance of that cheer. Of Mr. Michael Davitt it is impossible to speak at a gathering of my countrymen without according to his personality the tribute of our respect and admiration for his sympathy, his unstinted sympathy, in this the hour of our sorest need. (Cheers). Well, Mr. Michael Davitt asked a question but got precious little in the way of information from Lord George Hamilton except this,—that the Natu brothers had been arrested with the sanction of the Secretary of State. But even the most astute of diplomatists is not always able to keep things to himself, and on the occasion of the budget debate Lord George Hamilton somewhat admitted the public into his confidence. He gave the reasons for the arrest and detention of the Natu brothers. To these reasons, gentlemen, I desire to invite your attention for a minute or two. I need not read the extract from the proceedings of the debate in the House of Commons. What Lord George Hamilton said in substance was this ; “there was a plot to subvert British rule, I suppose, among the Poona Brahmans” (Laughter)—I am coming to the Poona Brahmans presently—“and it was believed that the arrest of the Natu brothers would lead to the unravelling of this plot.” A plot ! A conspiracy ! Who are the conspirators and what are the objects of this conspiracy ? Mind you, it is not a blatant demagogue or a Congressman like myself who speaks, but a minister of the crown—the responsible head of the Government of India. When he says that there is a plot, that there are conspirators, that the air is surcharged with sedition, we listen to him with both our ears wide open. I ask is there any evidence for this plot ? There is absolutely none, and I will ask you to say also with me that there is none (cries of ‘None, none’). No, not a tittle of evidence in

support of this extraordinary assumption. On the contrary, what evidence there is completely demolishes the theory of Lord George Hamilton. (Hear, hear). Take the confession of Chapekar, poor unfortunate Chapekar (Laughter). (A European gentleman at the reporter's tables: "Is he the murderer?") He may or may not be the murderer. We need not take a jump into the unknown like Lord George Hamilton and say that he is. Whether he is the murderer or not is a matter which has yet to be decided by judicial tribunal. Now, gentlemen let us take confession of Damodar Chapekar. To that confession the dignity of official recognition has been extended. He has been treated as the veritable murderer. His confession has been duly recorded. He has been brought before the Magistrate time after time; witnesses have been examined upon the basis of his confession.

To all intents and purposes his statement has been regarded as making important revelation of facts. But does Chapekar say about this conspiracy? Who are the conspirators? Himself and his worthy brother (Laughter and Cheers). If you accept his statement, it must be said, the Congress should say it and I will say it on your behalf, that it absolutely absolves the Poona Brahmans of all complicity in this so-called plot. (Cheers.) (A voice—"The gymnasium of the Nattu brothers.") I will come to that point by and by. In the last century the great Edmund Burke, speaking from his place in the House of Commons, pleading for justice, pleading for mercy, pleading for the conciliation with America, made that ever memorable remark which ought to be engraved in character of gold on the portals of the India Office: "I cannot frame an indictment against the whole nation." (Cheers.) But Lord George Hamilton has performed this impossible task (shame) and no doubt it is a matter of shame that upon evidence which would not justify the hanging of a dog or a cat, the Secretary of State should bring this grave charge against a community which in the past

played an important part in the history of India (Cheers)—I hope I am not guilty of sedition (laughter)—and which still constitutes the intellectual aristocracy of the Western Presidency (Cheers), barring of course, my friend Mr. Wacha and a few Parsee gentlemen of light and leading associated in the work of the Congress. Now, I wish to turn to the point to which you have been kind enough to draw my attention. As regards the Natu brothers, what does Chapekar say ? He says he knows nothing at all about the elder Natu ; Tatya Sahab he knows slightly, and only on one occasion he had been to the gymnasium kept by Tatya Sahab. (Cries of "Is it enough" ?) Quite enough perhaps for the Government of India. (Laughter and cheers.) Nor is this all. Chapekar's statement is supported, completely supported, by the irresistible logic of facts. The murders were committed on the 22nd June. The arrests were made towards the end of July. (A voice—26th July.) That is still better. I ask, brother delegates, does it stand to reason, assuming that there was a conspiracy, that the conspirators slept over the matter for nearly a whole month and at the time when the Government was paralysed and panic-stricken, at a time when nothing had been done to frustrate the designs of the conspirators ? Does it stand to reason that they slept over this conspiracy for the period of a whole month, when they might have done something to give effect to their designs, and then quietly allowed themselves to be arrested ? This is not the way of conspirators. This is not the way how Guy Fawkes acted on a memorable occasion. The moments are precious with conspirators. Now or never is the rule of all conspiracy. (Hear, hear.) There is thus not a particle of evidence to connect Natu brothers with any conspiracy, much less with the Poona tragedy ; and yet they have been detained for five months without a trial and without a word of public explanation, and the Government of Bombay declined to take advantage of the splendid opportunity which offered itself the other day to explain the situation in reply to certain

questions asked in the Bombay Council. They rejected that opportunity, evaded the points raised and refused all information. The Government was asked to state what were the grounds for the detention of the Natu brothers. Lord Sandhurst replied that they were detained for reasons of State. We did not want the authority of Lord Sandhurst to tell us that ; we knew that it was for reasons of State that they have been arrested and detained. We want to know—the public want to know—what these reasons of State are. We have a right to know what these reasons of State are. It is playing with the question, it is trifling with the matter to say that they were detained for reasons of State. Every now and then we are reminded of our obligation and our responsibilities. Have the Government no obligations? Are all the obligations on our side, and is it not highest obligation of the Government to loyally, faithfully, and in all honesty of purpose, to give effect to Parliamentary statutes in the beneficence spirit in which those statutes have been conceived? I cannot help thinking that the answer of the Government involves disloyalty to Parliamentary statutes and affords a deliberate affront to the public sentiment and the people of India. I am sorry to have to speak of the Government of Bombay in these terms ; I am sorry that I have not much affection for the Government of Bombay. Brother delegates, security of life and property are the great foundations upon which rests the vast, the stupendous, the colossal fabric of British rule in India. What becomes then of these inestimable blessings if at any moment your property may be confiscated, and you may be arrested, kept in custody for months together, without a trial and without a word of explanation? What becomes of the boasted vaunt of the boon of personal liberty and personal security under British rule under these circumstances? Well, brother delegates, I think that under the circumstances we are justified in pressing, if not for the repeal, at any rate for a substantial modification of these regulations. There are three regulations bearing upon this

matter—Regulation III of 1818 of Bengal, Regulation II of 1819 of Madras, and Regulation XXV of 1827 of Bombay. These regulations arm the Government with the power of detaining any person in custody for the reasons set forth in the preamble. The reasons stated in the preamble are these: "The maintenance of the alliances between the British Government and foreign States, the preservation of tranquillity in the protected Native states and the security of the British territory against internal commotion." These regulations were passed in 1818, 1819 and 1827. This is the year of Grace 1897. The most recent of the regulations therefore was passed seventy years back only nine years after the domination of the Peshwas had come to an end. There might have been some justification for these regulations in those early times when the British Empire was yet in its infancy, and when there were so many elements which constituted a danger to the State. Is there any the smallest justification for them at the present moment? (Cries of, "None") None whatever—I entirely agree with you. We have a vast and stupendous fabric of law reared up by the genius and labours of a succession of eminent lawyers—one of the most magnificent systems of jurisprudence that the world has ever seen. Are not our laws amply sufficient to meet all possible and impossible cases of crime that may occur? To say that these regulations are necessary is to say that our legal system is defective. Lord George Hamilton has indeed come forward with an explanation in justification of these regulations. I need not read to you the exact word of that explanation. This is what he says in substance. He says that in India there is a large fund of religious and political fanaticism. Fund of fanaticism sounds queer, but that is the language of the Secretary of State and I bow to it. (Laughter.) The existence of religious fanaticism I admit, but political fanaticism I have never heard of. If the Secretary of State is cognizant of such a thing, he knows more than most people conversant with Indian affairs. This

religious and political fanaticism, he proceeds to describe, is more dangerous than dynamite,—it might explode at any moment and subvert the empire. In order to be furnished with necessary safeguards against this religious fanaticism, it is necessary, says Lord George Hamilton, that we should be provided with special powers, with a reserve of power. I am prepared to meet Lord George Hamilton on his own ground. Every Government, being the fountain of authority, the repository of sovereign power, necessarily possesses this reserve of power which it can always employ to meet the exigencies of State. Look at the state of Ireland. Ireland has been in a condition of chronic disaffection for the last six centuries. Has it been necessary to provide the Government of Ireland with a reserve of power to be employed for purposes of coercion? Nothing of the sort. When repressive measures had to be resorted to, all that was done was that the *Habeas Corpus* Act was suspended. Look at the extraordinary powers which the Home Secretary possesses. The Home Secretary can arrest and keep in custody any body he likes, but he must, before he leaves office, bring in an Indemnity Bill before Parliament which affords him an opportunity for justification and his opponents an opportunity for criticism. We want much less than what was necessary for Ireland. We don't want, at least for the present, that the *Habeas Corpus* should be extended to the interior. We would of course gladly have it if we could get it (hear, hear); but probabilities are that we cannot get it. Therefore our suggestion is this: that the regulations should be suspended by legislative enactment, and that if it be necessary to revive any of the regulations, then a proclamation should be issued in respect of a definite area, stating the reasons for the issue of such proclamation, and in any case, if a person is arrested under the regulation, he is to be kept in custody only for three months and no longer.

Ladies and gentleman, I do not know that I should be justified in detaining you any longer. (Cries of



“Go on, go on.”) We have recorded our protest. We have done our duty. The Government of India may change its policy, but we, the men of the Congress, true to ourselves, remain firm in our allegiance to those principles which gave birth to the Congress movement, and which will ensure to it its abiding utility. Now as of old, we raise aloft the banner of constitutionalism on which are engraved in characters of light the words “devotion to the British Crown and the sacred interests of our country.” (Cheers,) Now as of old, we wish for the permanence of the British rule. (Hear, hear). Now as of old, we wish to see that rule consecrated by the ties of eternal justice and the principles of universal freedom. We wish to see that rule ennobled and solidified by the frank and cordial acceptance by our rulers of the true principles of British administration. (Cheers) We appeal to them to abjure despotic methods. Despotism has been banished from Europe. Banished by whom? By England, the august mother of free nations (Cheers). And it is her high mission in Asia to supplant despotic methods by the forms of constitutional Government. Our rulers cannot remain stationary. Lord Landsdowne said on a great occasion that men and things cannot stand still in this Empire of the Queen. Nor they can go back. By this irresistible mandate of nature, by the ordinances of divine Providence, they are bound to press forward in that career of beneficence and progress which has added to the stability of British rule in India and which has won for it the lasting gratitude of the teeming millions of my countrymen. To us, it is a matter of inexpressible regret that in this year of the Jubilee, which the rest of the Empire are rejoicing in the accession of enlarged freedom, of extended trade and of universal happiness, we the people of India should have to deplore the retrograde policy of the Government of India; and the bitterness of this disappointment is intensified by the reflection that in the past, in all celebrations connected with the august personality of our graci-

ous Sovereign (Cheers) a substantial boon was conferred, or at any rate the promise of a substantial boon was made. In 1857, when Her Majesty undertook the Government of this country, she consecrated her connection by the issue of that proclamation which is our Magna Charta (Cheers, our watch-word, our battle-cry, the gospel of our political deliverance. In 1877, when Her Gracious Majesty assumed the Imperial title, the solemn promise was made for the wider employment of the people of India in public service of their country. In 1887, when the Jubilee was celebrated, Lord Dufferin foreshadowed the expansion of the councils on a representative basis, and what we have got in the year 1897, in connection with the crowning celebration of the most glorious reign that the world has ever seen? A profusion of titles and decorations conferred upon persons, some of whom are men like Sir Manchurjee Bhowmagree (Cries of "Shame"), followed by a policy of repression and retrogression. But I do not despair. There are elements of hope that cheer and stimulate us in the depth of our despondency. The attention of the British public has been prominently called to Indian question. We have only met with a temporary check. It may, in the words of Mr. Gladstone (Cheers), whose birthday is to-day, that the banner which we hold aloft may droop in our sinking hands, but there can be no doubt that others will rise, who born in happier times and under more fortunate conditions and aided in by the irresistible forces which silently develop themselves in the bosom of society, will carry that flag, if not, to an easy, at any rate, to an assured victory. The noblest heritage that we can leave to our children is the heritage of enlarged rights, safeguarded by the loyal devotion and fervent enthusiasm of an emancipated people. If we are not able to do that, let us see to it that the rights and privileges which have come down to us from the past and which we hope to transmit to those who come after us, may remain unimpaired and untarnished. It is inspired by such feelings and animated by such convictions that we desire to record this em-

phatic protest against these arbitrary proceedings of the Government and I am sure, having regard to the justice of our cause and the righteousness of our demand, the great God of nations, who silently and slowly but with irresistible might leads Kingdoms and communities onwards to their destined ends, will vouchsafe to our prayer his choicest blessings in plentiful abundance.

(Loud and continued applause.)

### BABU SURENDRA NATH BANERJEA'S SPEECH ON THE SEDITION BILL AT THE TOWN HALL MEETING.

Sir,

We must all regret the necessity which has called us together here—we must regret that it should be necessary for us, the citizens of Calcutta, in public meeting assembled, to ask the British Government, wedded to the traditions of freedom, above all to those of freedom of speech and writing, to continue to us a boon which that Government, unasked and unsolicited, conferred upon the people in the abundance of its own generosity. (Cheers) Those illustrious men who emancipated the Press—and none more illustrious in the brilliant records of Anglo-Indian history—yielded to no pressure—they were coerced by no agitation—they did not grant what they could not help granting—they acted under no imperious necessity, save and except what duty prompts and the paramount obligation they felt, in the discharge of their solemn responsibilities, to impart to their eastern fellow-subjects the knowledge, the culture, and the civilisation which had made them so great, so prosperous, and so happy. (Cheers) The freedom of the Press was thus a spontaneous gift, conferred by the rulers of the land. It was prompted by the purest beneficence which is only another name for the highest statesmanship, for, in this world of God's Providence, both in the concerns of public as well as of private life, wisdom and goodness are

inseparably linked together. (Cheers) Ever since 1835, we have enjoyed, with one short interruption, the boon of a free Press until we have come to love and cherish that which we have so long possessed, and to regard the freedom of the Press as a permanent part of our institutions ; and, by the allegiance we owe to the spirit of freedom which English culture and English influences have awakened in our breasts, we are resolved, by every constitutional means at our disposal, to resist the present proposals of the Government to modify the law of sedition, which, in the opinion of those who are most competent to form an opinion, are calculated to deal an irreparable blow at liberty of speech and writing in India. (Cheers) To us it is a matter of inexpressible satisfaction to be able to know and feel that in the protest which we here record to-day in the face of the world, we are supported by the sympathies of our Anglo-Indian fellow-subjects. (Applause) We re-echo their sentiments ; we voice forth their grievance ; we are assembled here to pass a vote of confidence in them for their manly stand in the defence of their rights and our rights. (Cheers) Above all, we rejoice in the solidarity of a united public sentiment among the different sections of our somewhat mixed and heterogeneous community. God grant that this feeling may grow and deepen until our Anglo-Indian fellow-subjects and the people of this country, rejoicing in the blessings of a common allegiance to a common Sovereign, will see their way to stand shoulder to shoulder to fight for the preservation, and if need be, the extension of their common rights and privileges. (Cheers) I have no hesitation in saying that upon our mutual sympathy and co-operation depend the best hopes of India's political emancipation. (Cheers) A few more Sedition Bills, and we shall be within a measurable distance of this blessed consummation. Sir, my memory carries me back to the days of the Vernacular Press Act. I took a considerable part in the agitation for the repeal of that measure ; in the words of Virgil, *quorum magna pars fui*. That was a measure of

restriction imposed upon the Press. It was supported by one section of the community—it was condemned by another. Those who condemned the measure won by the day. The Act was eventually repealed, for Englishmen, until and unless they have ceased to be Englishmen and to remember the great traditions of their race, cannot tolerate any restriction imposed upon the Press. (Cheers) The Vernacular Press Act, however, was not condemned with the emphasis or the unanimity of public sentiment which the present proposals of the Government have evoked. The Liberal Press condemned the Act, for it was a Tory Viceroy who introduced it. The Liberal Press have condemned the Sedition Bill, despite the fact that it has met with the countenance and support of a Viceroy who is not only an advanced Liberal, but a Home Ruler to boot. (Cheers) Prophecy is a dangerous art. No one ought to prophesy, says the proverb, who does not know. For my part, at all events, I am unwilling to assume the prophetic role. The gift of the seer is not vouchsafed to the men of the 19th century ; but this I do venture to affirm that, if our experience of the past is any guide for the future, if history has a tendency to repeat itself, then the present proposals of the Government, like the Vernacular Press Act, will go the way of all things human—they are doomed—their doom is written upon the wall in characters of flame. (Cheers)

Sir, you have referred in the Resolution to the unanimity of public sentiment which prevails with regard to the present proposals of the Government. You allude to certain Associations in a somewhat prominent manner. Speaking for myself, and, I may venture to add, on your behalf, I think I may say that, it is impossible to refer to the Chamber of Commerce, whose distinguished President is in our midst, or to the Defence Association, or the Calcutta Bar, which is so worthily represented here by such able leaders as Mr Jackson, Mr. Pugh, and yourself, it is impossible to refer to these great public bodies without according to them the

tribute of our respect, gratitude, and admiration for the great services which they have rendered in this connection. (Applause) What do they say—what is the gist of their contention—what is the one point which they all insist upon with equal emphasis? They all say that no modification of the law is necessary, save and except a definition of the word “disaffectio n,” and of the phrase “feelings of disaffection.” Let me read to you an extract from the representations submitted by these bodies. The Chamber of Commerce says :—

The Committee do not consider that any special amendment is required in Section 124 A, as it stands at present, but would suggest that a clearer definition of the word “disaffection,” than that given in Explanation I, is desirable. With regard to Explanation II, they would also suggest that it should be recast on the lines of the second paragraph of Article 93 of the Digest of the Criminal Law by Sir F. J. Stephen, which expresses with very great lucidity what is not a seditious intention.

The Calcutta Bar, presided over by an eminent lawyer, whose persistent exclusion from participation in the legislative work of the Supreme Council is a matter of public misfortune, lays stress upon the same point. It says :—

Taking it then that section 124 A, ought to be confined to offences against the State, what appears to be needed is a definition of “feelings of disaffection.”

The defence Association, which in this matter has been defending Indian as well as Anglo-Indian rights, has suggested a definition of the word “disaffection,” with which you are all no doubt familiar. I will not repeat it here. It has been reproduced in every newspaper. If it were accepted, the difficulties of the problem would have been solved. The Government, however, has not thought fit to accept these suggestions. These public bodies urge that no modification of the law is necessary. Mr. Chalmers—(Hisses); Gentlemen, he is not a man who should be hissed. A man holding

his high position should always be accorded the utmost courtesy and respect. Mr. Chalmers is of a different opinion. He is not satisfied with the drafting of the section ! (Laughter) I am not a lawyer, and certainly not a draftsman, and I do not propose to rush in where angels fear to tread. But I may venture to point out that the drafting to which exception is taken, is the work of Macaulay, the greatest master of the English tongue, both in respect of elegance and precision, whom this century has produced. (Cheers) Nay more, the section as drafted by him, was approved of by such distinguished authorities as the late Sir Barnes Peacock and Sir Fitz-James Stephen, who, it is no exaggeration to say, occupied the foremost places in the front rank of the great profession to which they belonged. A complaint of this kind would be admissible, if Mr. Chalmers could show that his drafting is an improvement upon the existing law. Is it so ? Let us examine the matter a little closely. The section as revised by Mr. Chalmers says that whoever by words spoken or written, or by signs, excites, or attempts to excite "hatred" "contempt" or "disaffection" is guilty of sedition. "Disaffection" is not defined, but Explanation I says "~~dis~~affection" includes "disloyalty" and "all feeling of enmity." As the *Englishman* newspaper very pertinently observed "the Explanations grow." We have now only one Explanation to the section ; the Bill, as laid before the council by Mr. Chalmers, had two ; the Bill, as revised by the Select Committee, had three. Well, Sir, I am a schoolmaster, and I have sometimes to deal with explanations. When I find annotator piling words upon words to explain a sentence or phrase, I begin to suspect that he is somewhat foggy about the matter, and that he does not understand what he is about. (Laughter) I am afraid these growing Explanations threaten to land us in a bewildering maze of confusion. Let me ask,—What is meant by enmity.—What is the difference between enmity and ill-will ? Has Mr. Chalmers attempted to define "contempt" or "hatred" ? As

the Calcutta Bar points out "hatred" "contempt," and "enmity" are words which occur in old charges addressed by Judges to Juries, and they were deliberately omitted by the Law Commissioners with a view to avoid confusion, and they have been deliberately inserted by Mr. Chalmers with a view to render the Law more explicit. Mr. Chalmers is very anxious to guard the section against the criticism of ingenious counsel. Is it not very clear that the section as revised by him would lend itself more readily to the subtleties of learned counsel who would have no difficulty in running a coach and four through it ?

But if Mr. Chalmers had not made the section more clear, he has, at any rate, given no English law. One of the objects of the proposed modification is to place the law in accord with English law. Assuming that Mr. Chalmers is right in this contention, let me ask—who has ever heard of a Magistrate in England disposing of cases of sedition, or of a person convicted of seditious libel being liable under the English law to transportation for life ? But Mr. Chalmers himself must be convinced by this time that his view of the English law of sedition is not shared by the members of his profession. Criminal intent and an appeal to force constitute the essence of the law of seditious libel as it is understood in England. The element of force is altogether wanting in the law as laid down by Mr. Chalmers. Mr. Chalmers has not given us English law. He has not made the law more explicit. His endeavours in this respect have been attended with failure. But he has been eminently successful in another direction. If his proposals are enacted into law, he will have dealt an irreparable blow at liberty of speech and writing in India. The Bill, as revised by the Select Committee, is essentially the Bill as it was originally laid before the Council. The essence of the offence as originally defined remains untouched. Every non-official member of the Select Committee has dissented from Mr. Chalmers's view of the law, except Sir Griffiths Evans. (Hisses) Gentlemen,



again I plead for courtesy and dignity. It must be a matter of regret to us all that Sir Griffiths Evans should have separated himself, in regard to this question, from the non-official community and from the Calcutta Bar of which he is a member, and that he should have acted in a manner inconsistent with the traditions of the great profession to which he belongs, whose traditions as you, Sir, have reminded us are those of freedom. However that may be, Mr. Chalmers has placed before critics of public measures an impossible task. They are to make comments on the measures of Government with a view to the redress of grievances without exciting hatred, contempt, or enmity. Now, so far from this being practicable, the more effective the criticisms are, the more brilliant the writer is, the greater is the hatred, the contempt, and the enmity he is likely to create. Day after day, we denounce the frontier policy of the Government for all the waste and the frittering away of our resources which it involves. Day after day, we complain of the Home Charges and of the inequitable adjustment of cost between England and India in matters in which the interests of both countries are concerned. All this criticism is salutary ; it is necessary for the ends of good government, but with Mr. Chalmers's law it must expose the critic to serious risk. Critics of public measures must now write and speak with a halter round their necks. When the Bill is passed into law, adieu to public meetings and Town Hall demonstrations ! The voice of complaint will no longer be heard ! Silence, universal silence, not the silence of peace and repose, but that of death, will reign supreme throughout the land ! All public spirit and its attendant virtues of which public spirit is the foster-mother, will have disappeared ! (Cheers).

A Free Press is the ally of good government—its staunchest supporter in the paths of beneficence and progress—it is a potent instrument in the hands of the wise rulers of men for the dissemination of knowledge. It was a part of an effective educational machinery that it was most valued by

those who emancipated the Press in India. Political considerations did not enter into their calculations. They took their stand upon a higher ground, that of a great national duty which they owed to their eastern fellow-subjects. (Cheers) "It cannot be," exclaimed Sir Charles Metcalfe,—and the words should be engraved in letters of gold on the portals of the Government House; "It cannot be," said he, "that we are permitted to be here by Divine Providence merely to administer the country, to collect the revenues, and to make good the deficit; we are here for a higher and a nobler purpose altogether, viz. to pour into the East, the knowledge, the culture, and the civilisation of the West." (Cheers) Have our rulers forgotten their high mission? Have they forgotten these beneficent declarations which ring in our ears and which, God willing, we are resolved to enforce in the Government of this country,—not by countenancing tumult or sedition, against them we set our faces—but by availing ourselves of the constitutional means—and they are amply sufficient for our purposes, which a beneficent Government has placed at our disposal. Unhappily a wave of reaction is sweeping across the high places of Government, and is influencing the counsels of our rulers. Our rulers, staggered and amazed at the marvellous success of their own work, pause and hesitate, and would fain draw back. Let me remind them that they can no more roll back the tide of progress which has set in with such irresistible force than was Canute able to stop the rush of the on-coming wave. They cannot destroy their own handiwork, nor blot out of existence those achievements which constitute the most enduring monument of their philanthropy and wisdom. (Cheers) Above all, let them bear in mind, as you, sir, have justly observed, that to a foreign Government, unaided by representative institutions, a Free Press is a beacon of light, warning the rulers of the land of the difficulties and dangers which may beset the Vessel of State. To put out this light, or to dim its lustre, is a piece of administrative

fatuity, of which, I hope, the Government of Lord Elgin will not be guilty. (Cheers)

The present situation is indeed dark enough, but the outlook is not without circumstances of hope and encouragement, I have no doubt in my own mind as to the ultimate result of the agitation in which we are engaged. We are united. The non-official community are with us—more properly speaking, we are with them. The great Liberal organs have thundered forth their protests. The moral sympathies of Englishmen, no matter to what party they may belong—be they Liberals or Conservatives—must necessarily be enlisted on our behalf. The verdict of civilised mankind will support us in the struggle. Above all, we rely upon the justice of our cause and upon the operation of those progressive forces which contribute so largely to the life of humanity in the nineteenth century. (Cheers)

Bearing in mind all these circumstances, I may say with some little confidence that, when the heat and the dust of this controversy will have disappeared, when the excitement of the hour will have passed away, sobriety will have re-established its sway, and when our rulers will have resumed the even tenour of their minds, they themselves will come to the conclusion that repression is a feeble instrument of Government, and that the prosperity of Governments and the happiness of communities are best promoted and best served by the pursuit of a progressive policy which secures the good will of the people, commands their unhesitating assent, and provides a permanent and effectual guarantee against sedition and the spread of sedition, by enlisting on behalf of the Government the love, the respect, and the gratitude of those whose contentment is the strongest bulwark of Governments, and whose approbation is the highest reward which the rulers of men may aspire to. (Loud and prolonged Cheers).

AT THE BENGAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
ON THE CALCUTTA MUNICIPAL BILL.

The Hon'ble Babu Surendranath Banerjea said :—

Sir,

My first duty is to congratulate the Hon'ble member in charge of the Bill on the lucid and exhaustive statement with which he has prefaced his introduction of the Bill. Greatly as I differ from him with regard to his views about the Bill, and strongly as I condemn the measure, I am bound to recognize the tact, judgment and ability, and above all the conciliatory attitude which are so conspicuous throughout the speech. My Hon'ble friend rests his case not so much upon the failure of the Commissioners as upon the alleged inherent weakness of the system under which they had to work. It is the system rather than the men that he attacks. I commend this part of his speech. He has thus endeavoured so far as it lay in his power to clear the atmosphere and relieve the controversy of those personal elements which at one time threatened to darken the issues involved ; for I can conceive no greater misfortune than that we should in approaching this grave consideration allow our minds to be perverted, our judgments to be warped, by any sentiment of personal or party bias or by any lingering recollection of a controversy which I hope and trust has now been forgotten. We should endeavour in considering this question, to rise to the height of judicial impartiality and level-headedness, for the issues involved are of grave and far-reaching importance. If this Bill should unhappily become the law of the land, and if its principles were to be engrafted upon the system of Local Self-government which prevails in the moffasil, then I have no hesitation in saying—I say it with regret—but say it I must—that one of the greatest blessings which we enjoy under British rule and with the inauguration of which, Sir,

your name is so honorably associated, the inestimable boon of Local Self-government, will have become a thing of the past.

Well, Sir, if I have rightly understood the attitude of my friend, and it is an attitude which challenges the system rather than the men ; then the question which we have to ask ourselves is this—what are the grounds upon which he bases his conclusions ? My Hon'ble friend says in substance that the municipal system of Calcutta has been tried and has been found wanting, that the conservancy arrangements have broken down, that the constitution does not ensure prompt and continuous executive action, and that it is unequal to the strain of a grave and sudden emergency. This represents the sum and substance of his indictment against the Corporation. Great as is the authority which undoubtedly belongs to my Hon'ble friend as the Head of the municipal administration of these Provinces, I think we shall be guilty of no disrespect towards him, if we ask him to produce his evidence and to place before us the materials upon which he has based his opinion and upon the strength of which he invites this Council to endorse his judgment. Sir, if we examine the matter a little closely, we shall find that my Hon'ble friend has undertaken a task beset with serious difficulties. It will not be enough for him to show that in regard to the Municipal administration of Calcutta there has been a failure here—a defect there—a brake-down elsewhere. He must carry his evidence much further than that. He must show that the system has so completely failed, the situation is so desperate that no partial remedy will suffice—that there must be a radical and fundamental change—that the system must be broken up, the site cleared for the erection of a new and totally different superstructure. Nay more—he must advance a stage yet further. My Hon'ble friend must show that in the actual circumstances of Calcutta, menaced by the plague, the only remedy that is left open to us as sensible and wise men is to adopt the discredited Municipal system

of Bombay which was not able to keep out the plague. A more desperate position—one more entirely at variance with the dictates of reason and sound sense it would be difficult to conceive. My friend may well feel staggered, I will not say at the temerity of the enterprise, but the gravity of the task which he has imposed upon himself, and if he is not able to do justice to it, his great ability will not be at fault—the badness of the cause will be responsible for it.

Well, Sir, my Hon'ble friend has laid before the Council the Report of the Sanitary Inspectors appointed by the Plague Committee. I have not the smallest desire to whittle down the evidence of these distinguished experts ; but I have a complaint to make—a complaint with which I am sure the Council will sympathize—as to the procedure which my Hon'ble friend has thought fit to adopt. The Hon'ble Member has not done the Corporation the justice which the Corporation is entitled to receive at his hands. My friend has read out the indictment but not the explanation—the charge but not the answer of the Corporation. It is not for one moment to be supposed that the Corporation allowed judgment to go by default. At more than one meeting did the Corporation consider the Report of the Sanitary Inspectors, more than one explanation did they submit with regard to that Report. Some of the allegations were admitted, others were challenged, with regard to the rest explanatory notes were submitted. I crave the indulgence of the Council to be allowed to proceed with the details of the explanation submitted by the Corporation.

(a) Overcrowded and Badly-built Houses.—The general statements made under this head are mainly correct, but it is to be noted that most of the houses and huts attended to by the Medical Board were constructed before the present rules came into force.

I maintain therefore that the Commissioners are not responsible for this defect. But let us proceed.

(b) Defects of Public Latrines.—These defects are fully

admitted and will be remedied as soon as the unfiltered water supply is increased. It is to be hoped that this will be accomplished in six to nine months.

The unfiltered water supply has now been increased.

(c) Defects of Private Latrines.—In the opinion of the Commissioners the state of things, described by the Medical Board, is not common in pukka houses except in those of old standing, and as regards privies in bustees they would remind Government that previous to 1884 there were practically no privies in bustees at all. As soon as the unfiltered water-supply is increased, notices will be served upon the owners of houses in which there are bad privies to have them connected with the sewers. The Commissioners think it also necessary to add that in the case of some poor people the Commissioners have paid from Municipal Funds for the connection of their privies with the sewers. Para. 3 of the Health Officer's Note deals fully with this subject.

Now, Sir, there are 50,000 latrines in Calcutta. Could the Sanitary Inspectors have seen one-tenth or even one-hundredth part of these latrines? In some quarters, I am afraid, there is too great a disposition to jump to sweeping conclusions when they happen to be in harmony with their pre-conceived ideas. Could the laws of induction have been more openly set at defiance by scientific men who ought above all to be scrupulously careful of them?

(d) State of House-drains and Drain-pipes. It is fully admitted that these are in many cases choked and out of repair, but an establishment of Inspectors is kept up for the inspection of house-drainage.

Now I come to statements that are challenged by the Commissioners.

(e) State of Surface Drains.—The Commissioners are not prepared to admit the general statement that latrines are allowed to discharge into surface drains. Occasionally it is found that such a practice exists. With reference to para. 5 of the Sanitary Officer's Report they would call

attention to para. 5 of the Health Officer's Note (a copy of which is sent herewith) on the surface drains, and to para. 20 of the Chief Engineer's Note (sent herewith).

(f) Neglect of Road Scavenging.—As regards the sufficiency of the staff there is a considerable difference of opinion, and the whole question has attracted the careful attention of the Commissioners. As regards the question of the pollution of the sub-soil, although there is no doubt that in certain places this is the cause of many most noxious smells, yet it is a matter of doubt whether in many cases it is not the sewers which are mainly responsible. As to the means suggested to minimize the evils of pollution it will be observed from para. 12 of the Health Officer's Note that he is strongly opposed to the use of Perchloride of Mercury, and that in the face of such opposition the Commissioners have not hitherto thought it advisable to give this experiment a trial.

(g) State of Compounds and Court yards.—The Commissioners generally differ very much from the remarks of the Medical Board on this subject, if they are intended to apply generally to all localities, but they fully admit their applicability to Wards 5 and 7 (Burra Bazar and Jorabagan) as a whole, and for this reason have allotted to those wards a special establishment. Action is being persistently taken under Section 318.

I would in this connection call attention to the remarks which the Commissioners make on this head in a subsequent communication dated the 21st April 1897. They say:—

With regard to the remarks in this para, the Commissioners would point out that it is not apparent whence the Board got its information about the number of coolies, etc. employed, but from the Health Officer's report, dated 15th March, it appears that on that day 1,588 men were on the roll, of whom 1,317 were present at work, and also 329 carts. The whole of the sum allotted has now been spent. As regards the question of the supervising staff living in or



near the wards where they work, the Commissioners fully agree with the remarks of the Medical Board ; but they would point out that the cost of providing quarters is very expensive.

(h) Pollution of Wells.—With regard to this the Commissioners wish to point out that in recent years a very large number of wells has been filled up and this filling up will be proceeded with as soon as the water of the wells has been analysed and the increased supply of unfiltered water provided. The Commissioners are of opinion that if the existing wells are filled up before this is done, very great hardship will be suffered by many house-holders.

(i) State of Cowsheds and Stables.—Although a great deal undoubtedly remains to be done in the question of improving them, latterly there has been a most decided improvement in some instances, and it is to be believed that recent modifications in the Byc-laws will lead to still further improvement.

(j) The State of Hackney Carriage Stands.—The Commissioners are fully aware of the bad state of these stands, and scarcity of money has alone prevented them from making many of the improvements required.

It is the old question of the eternal want of pence from which Administrations higher than that of the Municipality suffer even more grievously than the Municipality does.

(k) Conditions of Bustees.—The Commissioners fully admit that there is a great deal of room for improvements in bustee, that they would call attention to the fact that a great deal has lately been done and that improvements are being steadily pushed on. More money than is required by the law to be spent on this head has been spent.

In ten years' time the Commissioners have spent 13 lakhs of rupees upon bustee improvement. When I joined the Corporation in 1876, a sum of only Rs. 10,000 was set apart for bustee improvement. Since then it must be admitted there has been an enormous growth in expenditure upon this most important sanitary purpose.

Disposal of House-refuse.—With reference to this the Commissioners would invite attention to para. 13, of the Health Officer's Note. Considerable difficulty is experienced in including native house-owners to allow the retention of the refuse food on their premises during the day, and it will be probably necessary to amend the Act on this subject.

Now here are statements and counter-statements—statements made by higher authority and counter-statements made by authority, equally high and equally entitled to weight. What are we to do in the midst of this conflict of testimony—this divergence of opinion—this war of opposing views? We are left in a dilemma, and we have a complaint to make against the Government that it has not lent us a helping hand to rescue us from this uncertain and dubious position. The natural, the moral procedure which the Government should have adopted in a case of this kind was to have appointed a commission which would have sifted the matter, taken evidence and submitted a report. That would have been in accordance with precedent, for when in 1884 a complaint was made by some of the rate-payers of Calcutta regarding the sanitary administration of the town, a commission was appointed with Mr. Justice Beverly as President. If such a commission were appointed and it found in favour of the views of the Sanitary Inspectors, why, Sir, that would have silenced all criticism, removed all doubts and would have enormously strengthened the hands of the Government in any legislation which it might have thought fit to undertake. I cannot conceive any possible objection to the appointment of a commission except on the score of delay. But, Sir, the constitution of the Calcutta Municipality has now been allowed to exist for a period of thirty-five years, extending over the life-time of a generation, and if it had been allowed to survive for a year or two longer, no great catastrophe would have happened, the world would certainly not have come to an end. Further, the commission might have been appointed with instructions

—with the mandate—to report within a definite time. The Beverly Commission to which I have referred was appointed in August 1884, it reported in January 1885. The Building Commission submitted its Report with praiseworthy promptitude. In judging of the Report of the Sanitary Inspectors and of its effect upon the course of legislation, the fact must not be overlooked that there is scarcely any European town, be it the richest, or be it the most perfect in regard to its sanitary arrangements, to some portion or other of which these or similar remarks might not be applicable. Take London, the capital of the British Empire the richest city in the world. London and Calcutta cannot of course be compared in regard to their sanitary arrangements. They cannot be mentioned in the same breath; but not many years ago, in 1883, an account appeared of the back-slums of London in a well-known book—*The bitter cry of outcaste London*—which would put to the shame the most vivid description of the insanitary condition of the worst parts of Calcutta. I will, Sir, with your permission read an extract from the book :—

“ We do not say the condition of their homes, for how can those places be called homes, compared with which the lair of a wild beast would be a comfortable and healthy spot ? ”

“ Few who will read these pages have any conception of what pestilential human rookeries are, where tens of thousands are crowded together amidst of horrors which called to mind what we have heard of the middle passage of the slave-ship. To get into them you have to penetrate courts reeking with poisonous and malodorous gases arising from accumulations of sewage and refuse scattered in all directions and often flowing beneath your feet; courts, many of which the sun never penetrates, which are never visited by a breath of fresh air and which rarely know the virtue of a drop of cleansing water. You have to ascend rotten stair-cases which threaten to give way beneath every step and which in some places have already broken down, leaving gaps that imperil

*the limbs and lives of the unwary. You have to grope your way along dark and filthy passages with vermin swarming. Then if you are not driven back by the intolerable stench, you may gain admittance to the dens in which these thousands of beings who belong as much as you to the race for whom Christ died, here live together. Have you pitied the poor creatures who sleep under railway arches, in carts or casks, or under shelter which they can find in the open air? You will see that they are to be envied in comparison with those whose lot it is to seek refuge here."*

Sir, in judging of the system of municipal government which it is now proposed to supersede, we must take into consideration the sanitary condition of Calcutta such as it was in 1876, when the municipal system of this city for the first time came under the control of the elected Commissioners. This was what Dr. Payne, the Health Officer, said of the sanitary condition of Calcutta :—

"On the evidence of its mortuary record the Town is surpassed in fatality by many Eastern Towns and by some in the West, and yet it is impossible to conceive a more perfect combination of all the evils of crowded city life in the primitive filthiness and disorder than is presented in the native portion of Calcutta. Dirt in the most intense and noxious forms, that a dense population can produce, covers the ground, saturates the water, infects the air and finds in the habits and incidents of the people's lives every possible facility for re-entering their bodies ; while ventilation could not be more shunned in their houses than if the climate were arctic instead of tropical. If then Calcutta be not a deadly place, filth in its utmost intensity must be innocuous and sanitation a pretentious sham."

Going back to a point of time still earlier in the history of the Municipal administration of Calcutta, to a point of time when the Municipal system was entirely controlled by the Government, we have revealed to us a state of insanitation which in the words of Mr., afterwards, Sir John Strachey,

constituted a scandal to a civilized administration ; and yet it is now seriously proposed to establish a form of Municipal administration which makes the nearest approach to complete Government control. Let me read an extract from the Report to which I have referred :—

For many years past the sanitary condition of Calcutta has been a constant subject of complaint and this condition has probably never been much worse than it is at the present time. The state even of the Southern division of the Town which contains the fine houses of the principal European inhabitants, is often most offensive and objectionable, while with regard to the Northern or native division of Calcutta which contains some hundred thousand people, it is no figure of speech but the simple truth, to say that no language can adequately describe its abominations. In the filthiest quarters of the filthiest towns that I have seen in other parts of India or in other countries, I have never seen anything which can be for a moment compared with the filthiness of Calcutta. This is true not merely of the inferior portions of the town or of the bye-ways and places inhabited by the poor classes, but it is true of the principal thoroughfares and of the quarters filled with the houses of the richest and most influential portion of the native community. If a plain unvarnished description of the northern division of Calcutta, bordered by their horrible open drains in which all the filth of the city stagnates and putrifies, were given to the people of England, I believe that they would consider the the account altogether incredible.

And again :—

It is not my wish to attempt to describe in detail the condition of Calcutta. To all who are here upon the spot the facts are notorious. The state of the capital of British India, one of the greatest and wealthiest cities in the world, is a scandal and disgrace to a civilised Government.

Such was Calcutta in 1863—such was Calcutta in 1876—such was the legacy which the Justices received from the

Government, and which, with the sanitary arrangements somewhat improved, they bequeathed to the elected Commissioners. And what use, let me ask, did the elected Commissioners make of this filthy bequest? Why sir, they turned it to splendid account. They introduced sanitary improvements which have converted a city, which from a sanitary point was a scandal to a civilized administration, into a city which is one of the healthiest in India, to which our countrymen flee in hundreds and thousands, driven from their malaria-stricken homes, as to a health-resort. The elected Commissioners completed the drainage and water-works which had been initiated by the Justices. They have taken in hand the drainage and the water-works of the suburban area—they have reclaimed bustees, filled up foul tanks and have opened out roads. The net result of their sanitary works has been that the price of land has been doubled within the last few years; and this, Sir, not owing to the expansion of trade and commerce,—for the growth of trade during the last five years shows a falling off, according to the statement of the Hon'ble Mr. Allan Arthur before the Supreme Council, as compared with its growth in the five years preceding—this result has been due to the advance of sanitation and the consequent improvement in the health of the people. The position which I have ventured to assume as regards the great sanitary improvements which have been effected under the present Municipal system is supported by high and competent official authority. To the testimony of these distinguished men, I desire to refer. Let me quote what Mr. Cotton, now Commissioner of Assam, said as a member of the Beverly Commission :—

“I have devoted myself at considerable length to this historical retrospect in order to demonstrate once for all how utterly unfounded is the charge brought against the Corporation that the action taken by it is fitful, spasmodic and at hap-hazard. It is true that at one time there was a period of inaction, but the reason for that is fully explained. The

policy of the Corporation is rather, as Dr. McLeod described it, one of gradual and progressive reform. The whole case is, as the Army Sanitary Commission describe it, as complete as it well could be. I do not think the true friends of Local Self-Government, who are watching with unconcealed anxiety the struggle for existence which marks the infant growth of a great principal, could find anywhere in this country more satisfactory tokens of encouragement and hope than exist in the metropolis. The small tree is here firmly planted. I am not careful to enquire whether a better practical administration of the affairs of the Town might not be possible. It is possible that the Municipal work of the city might be more efficiently administrated under the ideally perfect control of a benevolent despotism. But be that as it may, the policy of Government is now cast in another mould. We have another object in view, the education and training of the people, and for this end we are content to put up with many failures in practical administration. And so even if there had been failure in Calcutta, if the Municipal Commissioners had been found wanting, if there had been short-comings, I would have appealed to the Lieutenant-Governor in his consideration of the Report of this Commission to deal with those imperfections tenderly and with patience. But I have shown, and my colleagues have shown, that there has been no failure. The Corporation of Calcutta as a representative body commands the confidence of the vast majority of the rate-payers ; it has already done very much in the direction of sanitary reform ; it has not retrograded in giving effect to a single sanitary improvement ; stimulated by the healthy action of public opinion and profiting by the greater experience gained year by year, it has afforded, by the systematic enterprise of the past three years, the most solid guarantee that it will continue to advance on the path of progress."

I will not refer to the acknowledgment of the work of the Corporation made by the Commission itself. My Hon'ble friend the member representing the Corporation quoted it at

length ; but I will pass on to the evidence of Mr. Henry Lee, the Chairman of the Corporation, who thus observed in the administration Report for 1891—92 :

The most damaging criticism that is commonly levelled against the principle of Local Self-government in Bengal is that it prevents and obstructs a reasonable out-turn of work. I maintain that the record of the Calcutta Commissioners refutes this criticism. The system of municipal government that has been in vogue here for many years past doubtless entails greater demands on the time and patience of the Executive Officers than did the old Autocratic or Oligarchical system. And such demands have been growing and will continue to grow year by year. But so long as the strain can be borne, and the executive and the consultative or administrative officers of the governing body work harmoniously together, they produce a regular and satisfactory harvest of good works, of which there is no need to be ashamed.

One other quotation I desire to make in this connection, and that will be from the Government Resolution dated 20th November 1893—it is a Resolution of the Government of Sir Antony MacDonnell :—

Sir Antony MacDonnell has perused with much interest the report reviewed in the preceding paragraphs ; it records the execution of much useful work, especially in the direction of sanitation and of structural improvements, such as the extension of drainage and water-supply and the improvement of bustees, and for their share in carrying out these measures, the thanks of the Lieutenant-Governor are due to the executive officers of the Corporation, the Engineer and the Health Officer. The Commissioners themselves have, as a whole, displayed a care and attention to their duties which is very meritorious, and has in some cases risen to the level of devotion. The year, though not actually one of straitened resources, was yet clouded by the shadow of impending pecuniary difficulties, and the policy of the Commissioners has doubtless on some occasions been guided by this circum-



stance, which has induced them to shrink from expenditure on objects which have strong claims upon them. In executive matters the Lieutenant-Governor perceives an occasional want of vigour, especially in the collection of rates, the enforcement of the law in regard to license fees, and the recovery of expenses from the owners of bustees. But these defects admit of remedy ; and on suitable opportunities they will no doubt be remedied. Leaving them out of consideration Sir Antony MacDonnell very cordially acknowledges the services the Corporation have rendered to the city, and thanks them for the careful control which they have exercised over the various departments of the Municipal Administration."

From the testimony of high officials, let us pass on to the facts, and here is a statement which to save the time of the Council I will not read but will hand over to the reporters. It shows the out-turn of sanitary work done by the elected municipality which it is now proposed to supersede :—

	Calcutta. of 1876.	Calcutta. of 1888.
Brick sewers in miles . . .	39.21	42.57
Pipe sewers in miles . . .	47.34	144.50
Amount spent in drainage	Rs. 69,10,972	Rs. 96,97,724
Average quantity of water supplied to the Town . . .	6,541,154 gallons per day.	16,000,000 gallons with 4,000,000 gallons for the suburbs.
Total number of houses connected . . .	9,675	17,580
Amount spent in filtered water supply	Rs. 71,56,986	1,22,86,485 including un- filtered supply.
Unfiltered supply was . . .	721,675 gallons per day.	2,501,830

Length of Roads was	...	132 miles	147, miles be- sides 34½ miles of pub- lic lanes over sewer ditches.
Watering of streets	...	12,237,941 feet	16,173,033 feet
Gas Lamps	...	2,718	4,488
Oil Lamps	...	700	303
Tanks which remained			Tanks which were filled up
to be filled up	...	331	204
Conservancy	...	Rs. 155,100	Rs. 3 lacs.
Bustee Conservancy	...	Nil	Refuse is removed and the roads and drains swept in the interior of Bustees just as well as anywhere else.

All the refuse was thrown into open ditches filled with putrifying matters and a black greasy slime of several feet in depth.

All the open ditches, sewers, everything is swept once a day. The refuse is all removed once a day. The greasy slime of the ditches gone.

Bathing Platform	...	Nil	86
Public squares	...	14	19

The foregoing synopsis shews the vast improvements the Commissioners effected up to 1888, and since the amalgamation further improvements have been effected which are enumerated below.

			Rs.
Drainage and miscellaneous	...	...	7,86,686
Suburban improvement	...	...	13,97,087

Bustee and Town improvement ... ..	8,98,785
Nett cost till 31st March 1896 of	
Harrison Road ... ..	27,43,346
Water supply extension ... ..	34,10,071
	<hr/>
	92,38,975

#### CORPORATION UNEQUAL TO A SUDDEN EMERGENCY.

But it is said that the Corporation is unequal to the strain of a grave and sudden emergency. I dispute the proposition. There is absolutely no evidence in support of this view of the matter. Whatever evidence there is, distinctly negatives it. Well, Sir, there never was a greater crisis in the history of Calcutta than when it was feared that the plague would spread into the capital. How did the Corporation act on that occasion? It acted with vigour and promptitude. It was on the 24th September 1896 that it was reported in the newspapers that the bubonic plague had appeared in Bombay. The same day there being a meeting of the Corporation, the matter was considered by the Commissioners. On the following day,—the matter was again discussed by the General Committee. The Commissioners did not indulge in mere talk. That was not a season for talk or declamation, but for vigorous and decisive action. The Commissioners at once placed themselves in communication with the Government of Bengal which at that time was staying at Darjeeling, with the Commissioner of Police, with the Port Trust and the Railway authorities. The Government was asked to enforce a strict system of inspection in respect of all passengers coming from Bombay to Calcutta. Dr. Simpson, the Health Officer, was directed to visit different parts of the town daily instead of three times a week—his subordinates were to pay special attention to the cleansing of the town for which they were authorized to

entertain special establishments and suspected cases were forth-with to be reported to the Health Officer. At my instance, a sum of three thousand rupees was placed at the disposal of the Health Officer for any preventive measure which he might think fit to take. An extra conservancy establishment was entertained at an outlay of Rs. 5,500 a month. This establishment was eventually raised to 1500 coolies and 329 carts. Eight medical inspectors were appointed and the services of a Chief Superintendent of Conservancy were entertained on a salary of one thousand rupees. Nor was this all. Arrangements were made for an isolation hospital, and ambulance carts were provided. The operations of the Commissioners in this respect cost them a sum of two lakhs of rupees. Sir, the late Health Officer, Dr. Simpson, was always a severe critic of the Corporation, but the measures of the Corporation elicited praise even from him. This was what he said in his Administration Report :—

“From the above account it will be seen that no pains have been spared to protect Calcutta against an outbreak of Plague or to be in a state of preparedness to stamp it out, should the disease have unfortunately gained a foothold in this City”.

But, Sir, it has been said—and I regret to have to remark that the statement appears in the letter of the Local Government addressed to the Government of India, and it had been repeated by the Hon'ble member representing the Chamber of Commerce—that the Commissioners did all this under pressure. The Government letter says “it was not till the 22nd January and then under the strongest pressure from the Government and the Board that the Commissioners sanctioned a grant of Rs. 30,000 towards a further temporary establishment for cleaning up the town.” Sir, I venture to challenge this statement. Instead of the Commissioners being pressed by the Government, they were pressing an indifferent executive, strangely insensible to the exigencies of the crisis, to do their duty. This view of the matter will be

amply supported by a reference to the proceedings of the Commissioners. A question was asked at the meeting of the Commissioners on the 19th January 1897 by my friend, Babu Nalin Bihari Sircar, one of the ablest and most active among the Commissioners whom I am glad to see here, and the answer given by the Chairman will leave no doubt on the mind of any one that the Commissioners were fully alive to the exigencies of the situation, and they did not need any pressure from the Government or from any one else. Babu Nalin Bihari Sircar asked :—

What special measure have been taken by the Corporation since October last to remove these “accumulated deposits of past years ?” If no special effects have been put forward, will the Chairman kindly explain why this has not been done ? (3) Is not the Chairman aware of a resolution, passed by the General Committee and unanimously confirmed by the Commissioners in meeting to the following effect :— “That having regard, however, to the prevalence of the disease in Bombay, and to the intimate business relations that exist between the two cities, the Commissioners are decidedly of opinion that a thorough cleansing of the town should be effected as soon as possible by employing a special establishment, and that they are prepared to spend any reasonable amount for the purpose.” (4a) What action has been taken by the Executive on this resolution of the Commissioners passed so long ago as 25th October, 1896 ? (b) If nothing has been done, will the Chairman kindly explain why this resolution of the Commissioners has not yet been given effect to, particularly when the chances of an out-break of plague in Calcutta are not so remote now as they were in October last ? (5a) When does the Chairman propose to bring forward before the Commissioners specific proposals for entertaining other special establishments for the speedy and prompt removal of accumulation of dirt from all such parts of the town as abound in them ? (b) Will it be next week ?

I will not take up the time of the Council by reading

the answer that was given in full. I will confine my attention to the part which bears upon the point I am endeavouring to explain. Mr. Williams said :—

Before asking the Commissioners for extra establishment beyond the Special Cleansing Staff granted in October the Health Officer considered it desirable, in order not to put the Commissioners to unnecessary expense, to ascertain what the existing staff could do under the excellent and energetic supervision of Dr. Banks. Dr. Banks, after making himself thoroughly acquainted with the capabilities of the existing establishment and of the local insanitary condition of the city which of course required time, came to the conclusion that the establishment was inadequate—an opinion with which the Health Officer agrees. Dr. Banks has now placed before the Chairman a carefully considered statement in which he propose a very considerable increase on the present establishment and amounting to an extra expenditure of over two lakhs per annum. But the discussion of these proposals is likely to take up some time.

These proceedings took place on the 19th January. The Medical Board addressed the Government on the 20th, probably after having seen the proceedings of the Commissioners which appeared in the newspapers of the 20th. What the Commissioners did on the 19th January, it is very obvious, could not have been prompted by any communication which the Medical Board addressed to the Government on the following day.

Now contrast the proceedings of the Bombay Corporation with those of the Calcutta Corporation which it is to supersede. The acting Chairman, Babu Nilamber Mookerjee, addressed a telegram to the Municipal Commissioner of Bombay making enquires about the suspicious cases reported in the Calcutta newspapers. What was the answer that he received? Well, Sir, the Municipal Commissioner reported from Poona that there had been one or two suspicious cases. Here was the plague, the deadliest and the most insidious enemy which

Bombay has had to fight against in the whole course of the century, slowly making its way through the doomed city, and the Head of the executive of the Corporation—and the executive is to be our model—was at Poona from where he suspected one or two cases. Sir, I have no hesitation in saying that such a thing would have been impossible on the part of the Chairman of the Calcutta Municipality under the existing constitution. The supineness of the Bombay executive in the earlier stages of the plague recently formed the subject of a motion for a vote of censure by the Commissioners and the motion was carried in a modified form. What therefore is proposed is this—that the Municipal system of Calcutta which was tried by the stress and the strain of the plague and which on the whole was not found wanting is to be superseded by a municipal system which notoriously failed to meet the crisis? Well, Sir, I have always thought that experience was the guide of the practical administrator; but we are now going to discard the lessons of experience, and take a big jump into the unknown with results that are unknown. We are fallen upon evil times and upon evil tongues and by darkness and danger compassed round.

But, Sir, it is stated that our municipal constitution is unequal to the requirements of modern sanitation. Where is the evidence in support of this view of the matter? Here again the lessons of experience raise a strong presumption in favour of the Commissioners being well qualified and of the municipal system being well-adapted to meet the sanitary requirements of a large city like Calcutta. It is admitted that the scavenging is pretty well done; and you were good enough to say in your Palmer's Bridge speech that in the lanes and streets where municipal carts can have access, the cleaning is fairly well done. Whatever insanitation there is, is largely due to defects in the structural arrangements of the city; and for those defects neither the Commissioners nor the system under which they work is responsible. The Commissioners did not create Bara Bazar—they did not make the

filthy bastis,—they did not open out the narrow lanes. All that came as a legacy to them from the Justices and the Government. The Building Regulations did not come into force till 1889, and we have it on the testimony of Dr. Simpson and of the Building Commission that if these Regulations had been fully given effect to, even then they would not have gone very far. Whatever Building Regulations you may now pass, based on the most advanced continental models which the extensive researches of my Hon'ble friend may open up to him, they cannot have any retrospective effect. The sentiment of a civilized community would rise in revolt against any retrospective legislation. Whatever laws you pass cannot effect the existing pukka buildings of Calcutta. It is not laws but funds that are needed. You have to open up the congested areas of Bara Bazar and Jora Bagan. The Government ought to recognize its responsibility in the matter. Calcutta is the capital of the Province and of the Empire, and the responsibility of the Government to open up the congested parts of the metropolis was fully recognized, so far back as 1850 by Lord Wellesley, but it has merely been a recognition in name—no practical effect has been given to it. The question of structural improvements is a financial and not a constitutional question, and it is to be solved not by depriving the Corporation of its constitution but by providing funds. My Hon'ble friend the Member representing the Chamber, was good enough to express much sympathy with the Building Regulations. Will the mercantile community consent in the imposition of the Octroi? In Bombay the Octroi duties come up to about nine lacks of rupees a year. If we had such a fund at our disposal in Calcutta, the financial difficulty which is the difficulty in connection with this and most other problems will have disappeared.

But Sir, it has been said that the constitution of the Municipality does not ensure prompt and continuous executive action. Sir, if there has been any failure in this respect,



I have no hesitation in saying that the Government is responsible for it. The Government appoints the Chairman. Since 1890, we have had five Chairmen—in eight years we have five Chairmen. How can you possibly expect prompt and continuous executive action when the Chairman is being constantly changed? And, Sir, the duties of the Chairman of the Corporation are of an onerous description. They are very different from the duties that ordinarily appertain to district administration. They have to be learnt, and by the time the Chairman has learnt them, a new incumbent appears on the scene to relieve him of his responsibility. How can you possibly expect executive vigour and efficiency under such a state of things? Did the great and distinguished men who in the past have filled the office of Chairman ever complain of the weakness of their position—was ever such a complaint uttered by men like Sir Henry Harrison, Mr. Beverly, Mr. Cotton or Mr. William Souttar? If Sir Henry Harrison at all thought that his position was weak as Chairman, nothing could have been easier for him than to have amended the law when he was in charge of the Bill in 1888, on the lines now suggested.

Further it has been observed that the Municipality has no constitution, and that it is all fluid and indefinite and that it is impossible to fix responsibility. Sir, I must be permitted to express my surprise at this statement. Why Sir, in section 4 and in subsequent sections of the Municipal Act, we have sketched out for us the outlines of a firm, clear and consistent constitution. You may not like it—you may disapprove of it. All that I can understand, but the constitution is there set forth in clear and definite lines which any one who runs my read. Equally extraordinary is the statement that it is difficult to fix responsibility. Well, Sir, I have been connected with the Corporation for the last 22 years. I have been associated with numerous committees of enquiries connected with various departments of the Corporation, and speaking for myself and I may add on behalf my colleagues of

I will say that we never have had the smallest difficulty in fixing responsibility for the various sins of omission and commission that were discovered. Why, Sir, only the other day we had a committee enquiring into the Warrant Department, and we had not the smallest difficulty in finding out who were to blame and who were not to blame. In this connection, I would desire to call attention to a note issued by Sir Henry Harrison delegating his powers to his subordinates and fixing their responsibility. For the first time under the Act of 1888, the Chairman was empowered to delegate his powers to his subordinates—he did not possess this power under the Act of 1876, or under the still earlier Act of 1863. On the passing of the Act of 1888, Sir Henry Harrison drew out a statement assigning duties and fixing responsibility with that statesmanlike breadth and sagacity for which he was so conspicuous. I will read an extract or two from this statement :—

The Secretary is empowered to sign all letters issuing on behalf of the Commissioners, or of the Chairman, and all orders, after satisfying himself that order has been passed by an officer entrusted with due authority to pass it. He is entrusted with the seal of the Corporation and with the custody of valuable documents, contracts, and records. He will expressly see that all notices of meetings are duly issued, and that the terms of the Act regarding such notices are complied with.

The Engineer will exercise the powers necessary for the efficient performance of the duties of a Chief Engineer in a large city. He will directly supervise and control what are ordinarily known as the Water Works Department, the Drainage Department, and the Road Superintendent's Department. He will also have under his orders the Workshop Superintendent and Workshop Establishment, the Municipal Railway Establishment, and the Salt Water Lake Establishment. The maintenance and repairs of all the Municipal buildings and machinery is also placed under his general supervision. .

*Drainage Inspector* :—Section 290 (*Inspect drains, etc., issue one hour's notice of intention to clean out drain and remedy defect*).

Of course, it does not follow that these subordinates will always exercise, without reference to the Engineer, the powers assigned to them ; the Engineer should make them clearly understand that they should always consult him in all matters of importance as heretofore, and he will be generally responsible to the Commissioners and myself for all orders issued by his subordinates. The object of assigning power is not to limit responsibility, but to enable the subordinate's action to be legally valid. The same remark applies to the powers conferred on the Engineer.

The Health Officer will, in a general way, exercise the powers necessary for the efficient performance of the duties of the Chief Executive Officer of Health in a large city. He will directly supervise and control what are ordinarily known as the Conservancy Department, the Nuisance Department, and the Bustee and Sanitary Departments. He will also have under his orders the Assistant Health Officer and his own office, the Food Inspectors, the Medical Inspectors, the Analyst to the Corporation, the Deputy Superintendent of Vaccination and his establishment, all officers and subordinates engaged in the registration of births and deaths, whether at the Registration Offices or at the burning-ghats and burial grounds, the Gowkhannah Superintendent and Establishments, and the Superintendent of the Slaughter house. All the markets of the town are also placed under his general supervision.

Now I ask could there be anything more clear than this delegation of duties and the responsibility, which such delegation necessarily involves, and yet it is said that it is difficult to know where the responsibility resides !

#### THE BOMBAY SYSTEM.

Thus it will be seen that the grounds upon which it is

sought to justify the supersession of the Calcutta Municipality will not stand the test of scrutiny. When tried in the crucible of reason and common sense, they vanish into thin air. You propose to give us the constitution of the Bombay Municipality. But the fact is overlooked that the entire system of local self-government in Bombay is retrograde when compared with the system which prevails in these Provinces. You, Sir, very well remember the attitude of the Bombay Government in regard to Lord Ripon's scheme of Local Self-government, and the remonstrance which has become historical and which as Home Secretary you addressed to that Government. I will read an extract from your letter :

"The Governor General in Council is at a loss to conceive what can have led the Government of Bombay to suppose that the Government of India had any intention either of subverting altogether the existing system in Bombay, or of conferring unlimited powers upon municipalities and local boards. In the separate communication to the Government of Bombay noted on the margin, stress is laid upon the advantages which the existence of a widely spread system of municipal and local fund boards gave to that Presidency in following out the principles advocated by the Supreme Government. Not subversion but adaptation and expansion of existing arrangements was what the Government of India desired. Further more the powers which it is proposed to entrust to local boards are not in any sense unlimited, but are in fact most strictly limited."

In such an insalubrious atmosphere with the weight of official opinion arrayed against it, the tender plant of Local Self-government could not thrive, and the whole scheme is conceived upon lines far less liberal than what we find in Bengal. Here, Sir, in Bengal in most moffusil municipalities, two-thirds of the members are elected ; in Bombay only one-half of the members are elected. In most moffusil Municipalities in Bengal, the chairmen are elected ; in most moffusil Municipalities in the Bombay Presidency, the chairmen are

nominated. As in the interior, so in the Presidency town *the system suffers by comparison with that of Bengal.* In 1865, the Bombay Municipality was constituted upon a basis which made the Chairman the autocrat, or as my Hon'ble friend the member for the Corporation said the other day—'the despot of the situation.' The system hopelessly broke down after a short trial. It brought the Corporation to the verge of bankruptcy, and this autocratic system had to be abandoned, and the Municipal administration was re-cast in 1872 upon more liberal lines. The Act of 1872 was amended by the present Bombay Act, and it was passed on the clear understanding, at any rate, on the part of the Indian members of Council, that the Corporation was to exercise general control over the executive, and that it was to supervise, direct and guide the executive. This was what the Hon'ble Mr. Telang said :—

Mr. Pherozshah and myself are most anxious that there should not be any interference with the executive functions of the Commissioner. We only want that it should be subject to the general control of the Municipal Corporation, and that is substantially provided for the present Bill. I am not prepared to admit that, under the sections of the Bill as we have passed them, the Commissioner is what is called a co-ordinate authority. I do not think he is. That is not a correct description of his position under the Bill. I understand he is a subordinate in every respect except as regards the details of executive work, in which he is untrammelled and not to be interfered with. That is his position, and that is what it ought to be.

The Hon'ble Mr. Mehta expressed himself very much to the same effect.

The greatest work that the Corporation has yet undertaken—the construction of the Tansa Water Works—was undertaken by it, not at the initiation of the Municipal Commissioner, but of one of its own members. I could multiply these instances ; but I think I have said enough to show

that the credit of this remarkable success justly belongs, in the main, to the constitutional scheme under which the Corporation carries on the administration by the hands of its executive officer, constantly and continuously controlling, criticising, supervising, and directing him. To revert from a scheme of such promise and performance to the discredited principal of the Act of 1865 would be a blunder indeed.

#### THE IDEA NOT A NEW ONE.

This idea of providing the Calcutta Municipality with the constitution of the Bombay Municipality is not a new one. History has a tendency to repeat itself. Human events move in cycles. So far back as 23 years ago, Mr. Schalch from his place in this Council proposed the adoption of the Bombay Municipal constitution. The proposal was objected to by Kristo Dass Pal as a half-measure—it was vehemently opposed by Mr. Stuart Hogg, then Chairman of the Corporation; and the opposition was so strong that the proposal was not even formulated in the shape of a definite Resolution.

Sir, it is worthy of remark that the Bombay Municipal Bill which is to furnish the model for our Municipal constitution was stoutly opposed at the third reading of the Bill by Mr. Forbes Adams. Mr. Forbes Adams was afterwards knighted for his distinguished services, and was the representative of the non-official European community in the Bombay Council. This was what he said :—

After the full discussion which has taken place during the debate on the amendments, it may perhaps be thought superfluous that anything should now be said. I cannot, however, refrain from taking advantage of this opportunity to observe that much as I hope that the Bill now about to be read a third time may be found in practice to work smoothly and satisfactorily, I harbour and entertain grave misgivings. I regret that Your Excellency's Council has not seen its way to give such consistency and all-pervading-

*ness to the great central principal of the Bill—the principal that the Corporation is the governing body—that no possibility of question, uncertainty or clashing could hereafter arise. The idea of co-ordinate authority seems to me to be fraught with chance of friction and irritation. It is an attempt to reconcile what is irreconcilable. It possesses the elements of unsettlement and feud. I firmly believe the Bill might throughout all its sections have emphasised and accentuated its central principal without running the slightest danger of fettering or interfering unduly with the Commissioner in carrying out the details of the executive work of the Municipality.*

#### THE WANT OF INTEREST ON THE PART OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY IN MUNICIPAL WORK.

We deplore the want of interest on the part of the European community in our Municipal concerns. We should rejoice if they could be persuaded to co-operate with us in our Municipal work. But the Hon'ble member in charge of the Bill completely misses the fundamental conditions of the problem. I cordially acknowledge that Calcutta owes its greatness to a considerable extent to European trade and commerce ; but it is not to be forgotten that European merchants come here for a particular purpose—viz. their business ; and it is no part of their business to feel an interest in the insanitary drains and bustees which may abound in Bara Bazar and Jora Bagan. Their business is all-engrossing, and in these days of keen competition leaves them no time for other and weighty public affairs. Our laws indeed bear traces of the efforts of the Legislature to enlist the sympathies and to secure the co-operation of the European community in the Municipal work of the town. Under the Act of 1876, the southern Wards of the town inhabited by European had each the right of sending three Commissioners to the Corporation, while the northern Wards each sent only two Commissioners. The experiment did not succeed. Under

the Act of 1888, special constituencies were created for the benefit of the European community. The experiment again did not succeed ; and now we are embarked upon another experiment, upon somewhat different lines but in the same direction. Well, Sir, I am not a prophet. Prophecy is a dangerous art. No one ought to prophesy unless he knows ; and for my self from my place in this Council, surrounded by the legislative wisdom of this Province, I have no desire to assume the prophetic function. But if our experience of the past is any guide for the future, then I have no hesitation in saying that as our experiments in this direction have not hitherto been attended with success, we cannot hope for a better result from the new one which we are about to try. My Hon'ble friend the member representing the Chamber of Commerce, is confident of success. He is more fortunately situated than myself. To him has been vouchsafed the gift of the seer which is denied to the less-gifted children of the 19th century. Let me place before the Council the views of two high officials in this connection. This was what Sir Henry Harrison said from his place in the Bengal Council :—

Again if I had any hope that the European members would take the same interest as the native members I should be more disposed to yield to the Hon'ble Mr. Irving's argument, but I am afraid we must put this aside as really out of the question. I believe that to some extent they have been kept away from the meetings by finding they are in a minority, but at the same time they have also found that it was impossible for them to give the same attention to the work of the Municipality as those who have ample leisure and to whom it is almost a pleasure. There are a certain number of leisured gentlemen among the native Commissioners who have often come two, three, or four times a week to committee meetings to do work which is certainly not of transcendental interest. Now is it possible to hope that we can get European gentlemen who have business to attend, to



whom time is money, to attend and take part in work of this nature ?

A higher authority than even that of Sir Henry Harrison, the then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, spoke in the same strain Sir Steuart Bayley, as president of the Council, said :—

My own fear is just the contrary—that you will never be able to get the representatives of Commerce to go out of their way to bring their knowledge and practical ability to bear on the affairs of the town. I wish it could be otherwise.

What do we find in Bombay under the operation of the Act which is to supersede our law and which, it is said, is calculated to ensure the co-operation of the European community in our Municipal affairs ? Why, Sir, the average attendance of the Indian element is higher than the average attendance of the European members of the Corporation. Here is a statement which I have obtained from Bombay ;—

There were 59 Corporation meetings in 1895—96. The rates of average native attendance to these meetings was 64, against 54 of Europeans.

In 1896—97 there were 56 Corporation meetings, the rate of average native attendance was 56 against 41 of Europeans.

It will be seen that the attendance of Europeans was much higher for 1895—96 than for 1896—97. The difference is easily explained Dr. Blainey, one of the most active European members of the Corporation, resigned in 1896, and there was a perceptible falling-off in the average attendance.

#### REPLY TO THE HON'BLE MR. TURNER'S SPEECH.

And now, Sir, with your permission, I desire to advert for a moment to the speech of the Hon'ble member representing the Chamber of Commerce. I must deprecate the tone and the style of the speech. My Hon'ble friend professed great admiration for the speech of the Hon'ble member in

charge of the Bill. Admiration is best expressed by imitation. The Hon'ble member representing the Chamber did not however imitate the conciliatory attitude of the Hon'ble member in charge of the Bill. His speech, I regret to have to say, is objectionable both in matter as well as in manner. Many of the statements which he put forward as facts, and the whole drift of his speech is misleading. I am sure when my Hon'ble friend has heard me, he will come to the conclusion that he has done scant justice to the Corporation and I have no doubt he will see his way to modify his opinions. I desire to invite the attention of the Council to his statement of facts. My Hon'ble friend observed in regard to the drainage scheme of the added area that a standing committee of business-men would have finished in seven months a work over which the Corporation spent seven years. Surely my friend could not possibly have known all the facts when he hazarded this prophecy. The scheme embraced an area of 15 square miles and was originally estimated to cost one crore and seventy lakhs of rupees. The Commissioner consulted Mr. Hughes and Mr. Baldwin Latham, the greatest drainage expert in the world. They carefully considered the matter with the result that they reduced the estimate from one crore and seventy lakhs to seventy-six lakhs—they saved nearly a crore of the rate-payers' money. My Hon'ble friend will admit that any business from which after seven years' deliberation could save a crore of rupees would be justified in congratulating itself upon the result. Seven years' deliberation terminatting in the saving of a crore of rupees is deliberation fruitful of economy of which any business firm might well be proud. It is perfectly true that the Commissioners were censured for their delay in this matter by the Government of Sir Charles Elliott; but it is equally true that they were absolved from all blame by the Government of Alexander Mackenzie. Let me read to you the Resolution of the Government :—

For this reason, although the subject has been discussed

in the newspapers incidentally referred to in the administration reports of the Commissioners for the last five years, no continuous history of the various phrases of the discussion, and no final expression of the views of the Corporation as a whole, has yet been laid before Government. Had such a record of facts and opinions been before Sir Charles Elliott, when he recorded his Resolution of the 8th November 1895, it seems to the present Lieutenant-Governor to be doubtful whether the general condemnation of the supposed inaction of the Commissioners in respect of the drainage question, which is contained in the first paragraph of the Resolution, would not have been qualified by some reference to the intrinsic difficulty of the problem, and the conflicting opinions expressed by the technical advisers of the Corporation.

And again :—

In their joint report on the drainage question Messrs. Hughes and Kimber, after full consideration, and with a knowledge of the facts necessarily much more minute than Mr. Latham could have acquired during his brief visit to Calcutta, reject, as based upon incomplete or erroneous data, the main feature of his scheme, and conclude that it is impossible to construct an open low-level reservoir for the discharge, gravitation, of the combined sewage and rainfall of Calcutta. In the Lieutenant-Governor's opinion this fact, taken with the reduction or the estimate made by Mr. Kimber from 170 lakhs to less than 79 lakhs, is in itself, sufficient to show that, so far as the drainage question is concerned, neither Corporation nor their Chairman can fairly be charged with unreasonable delay in arriving at a decision on an engineering problem of exceptional difficulty. Had they accepted and proceeded to carry out Mr. Baldwin Latham's scheme, with no more deliberation than was enjoined on them by irresponsible opinion in Calcutta, (The speaker here said :—" You, Sir, referring to the Hon'ble Mr. Turner, the member for the Chamber, have made yourself the exponent in this Council of this irresponsible opinion ") they would

have committed themselves to a project which would have more than double of that now put before them, and which might not in certain essential features have fully met the circumstances of the case.

Then again Hon'ble friend referred to the reduction of Rs. 30,000 in the Health Officers Budget. If he knew all the facts in connection with this reduction, I am sure instead of blame he would have bestowed praise upon the Commissioners. The facts are these :—The year was a year of unusual financial depression. Mr. Lee, the Chairman, of his own motion and without any pressure from the Commissioners, asked the Heads of Departments to reduce their Budgets. The Assistant Health Officer who was then officiating for the Health Officer cut down his Budget by Rs. 56,000. In the meantime Dr. Simpson returned to his duties. He thought the reduction had been carried too far and cut it down to Rs. 46,000. Now mark what the Commissioners did when the matter came up before them for consideration. They raised the expenditure of the Health Department and would not consent to reduce it to below Rs. 30,000. Now let me ask my Hon'ble friend whether after this explanation, he does not think that the Commissioners were worthy of praise rather than of blame for the part they took in this matter? Reference has been made to the reduction of Rs. 19,000 for road-scraping. It is perfectly true the Commissioners cut down this amount, but surely not on the ground of economy. They insisted upon the road-scraping been removed by their own conservancy carts. They objected to this work being by hired carts for which Rs. 16,000 had been provided, on the ground that the work was badly done and the Corporation did not get an adequate return for the money spent. Subsequently the Commissioners granted a sum of Rs. 7,000 for road-scraping. My Hon'ble friend has referred to a sum of Rs. 8,000 which had been disallowed for the conservancy arrangements of the added area. Here again the Hon'ble member is ignorant of the facts of the case. A sum of Rs.

13,000 had been provided for the conservancy arrangements of this part of the town. In the middle of the year after the Budget had been framed, a further sum of Rs. 8,000 was asked. Mr. Ritchie, the Chairman himself, said that the Commissioners could not grant this extra sum. In judging of the policy of the Commissioners in connection with the Health Officer's Department, it is not surely fair to pick out an item of expenditure here and an item there, and say that the Commissioners have not done their duty. The whole expenditure on the Health Officer's Department extending over a series of years would alone give a correct view of the policy which the Commissioners have followed in this matter. I have drawn up a table of expenditure extending from 1889-90—to 1896-97; and what do we find from the table? A scale of expenditure progressively increasing with the growing sanitary requirements of the town and the financial ability of the Corporation to meet them. In 1889-90, the expenditure on the Health Officer's Department was Rs. 9,27,947; in 1890-91 it was Rs. 9,27,446. Now take the last two years of the period. In 1895-96 the expenditure was Rs. 10,19,739; in 1896-97, it was Rs. 10,96,357 or nearly 11 lakhs of rupees. Thus the expenditure has been steadily progressing with the expansion of the sanitary needs of Calcutta. One item more, and I have finished my examination of the distinct allegations my Hon'ble friend has made against the Corporation. He has referred to an item of Rs. 50 which the Commissioners disallowed although the money had been paid by the Chairman, Mr. Ritchie, to Mr. Wilson who was then a candidate for the Gowkhana Superintendentship. The Hon'ble member possibly referred to this matter as an instance of financial meanness on the part of the Commissioners. Here again he displays only a superficial knowledge of the facts of the case. The Commissioners had no option left in the matter. Under the law they were bound to disallow the sum, and Mr. Ritchie himself admitted that the Commissioners were in the right

and that he was in the wrong. This was what he said about the matter at the meeting of the Commissioners :—

Since the resolution was passed (by the G.C.) he had enquired what would have been done in Government service under similar circumstances—what view would the Accountant-general take of an item such as this, and Mr. Ritchie was bound to say that the answer was it would probably not have been sanctioned. He thought that in most matters he as well as the Commissioners could not do better than to follow the procedure of the Government who dealt with many similar cases and he had therefore caused the amount to be refunded.

Sir, my Hon'ble friend had referred to a communication of the Chamber of Commerce addressed to the Government dated the 10th July 1895. In that communication the Chamber complained of the increase of typhoid fever. On the matter being inquired into, it was found that there had been no increase of typhoid fever, and the Government in its reply to the Chamber censured the Health Officer for lending the weight of his name to the spread of a false rumour. I will read an extract from the letter of Government :—

It is a matter of much regret that after lending the weight of his authority to the statement that typhoidal fevers are largely increasing in Calcutta, the Health Officer should have neglected to comply with the request that the grounds of that opinion might be fully set forth. Owing to this omission it is impossible, as the matter now stands, to arrive at any certain or even probable conclusion on the important question whether the increase in fever mortality which has occurred during the last three years in Calcutta is due to purely local causes which admit of being diminished or removed, or to general causes affecting the whole surrounding country, which it would be vain to attempt to cope with. The position is a very unsatisfactory one, and illustrates the damage that may be done to sanitary progress by making vague general assertions and withholding the evidence upon which they are based.

One other remark I desire to make in connection with the speech of the Hon'ble member representing the Chamber. He observed that the present Bill provided for a fair representation of all sections of the community in the Corporation. Does he regard it as a fair representation of the rate-payers that on the General Committee, they should be represented by only one-third of the entire number? Is it fair that those who pay the maximum of taxation should have the minimum of representation? Such an arrangement I am sure will not commend itself to our sense of justice and fair play.

#### THE GIST OF THE PROPOSED CHANGE.

Well, Sir, we have been told that under the proposed law there will be 75 Commissioners as before, and that the conditions of the franchise and of the distribution of the Wards will remain unaltered. The Commissioners will vote the Budget, fix the rates and then—I was going to say—go to sleep. Their function will be like that of the gods of the Epicureans of old as described by Cicero in his *De Natura deorum*—they created the world and then went to sleep. The gist of the proposed changes may be summarized as follows:—The transfer of the rate-payers to the official representative of the Government and to the representatives of the European mercantile community. The supreme power of the Corporation will be gone—Local Self-government will be gone. Far better would it be to do away with this semblance of a show—this mockery of Local Self-government—and convert the Calcutta Municipality into a Government bureau, controlled and directed by the Government.

Let me observe that in all European countries which have any form of municipal government, the supreme authority is always vested in the Corporation. This is what Mr. Albert Shaw says in his well-known book.

Municipal Governments, elsewhere than in the United States, after having constituted a ruling body, do not erect a separate one man power and give it the means to obstruct

the ruling administrative body and to diminish its scope and responsibility. The Mayor elsewhere is an integral part of the Council. English, Scotch, and Irish municipal government is simply government by a group of men who are to be regarded as a grand committee of the Corporation—the corporation consisting of the whole body of burgesses or qualified citizens. In Glasgow it is a committee of seventy-eight ; in Edinburgh of forty-one ; in Manchester, of one hundred and four ; in Birmingham, of seventy-two ; in Liverpool, Leeds, Sheffield, and most of the large English towns, of sixty-four ; in Dublin, of sixty ; in Belfast, of forty ; and in the other incorporated towns of the United Kingdom it varies from twelve to sixty-four, according to their size. So far as these bodies have authority to pass by-laws at all, their authority complete, and nobody obtrudes a veto. They appoint and remove all officials. They have entire charge of municipal administration, distributing the work of departmental management and supervision to standing committees of their own number, which they organize and constitute as they please. If such a local government cannot be trusted, the fault is with popular institutions. It is quite certain to be as good a government as the people concerned deserve to have. The location of responsibility is perfectly definite.

Municipal Government in America is differently constituted. It is organized upon lines which we are very unwisely going to imitate in the Bill before us, and the municipal system in America is a failure. This is what Mr. Albert Shaw says :—

The typical American Mayor is no part of the Council or its organization. He is elected directly by the people. He is an independent, co-ordinate authority. He bears somewhat the same relation to the council that the President of the United States sustains towards Congress or the Governor of a State towards the Legislature. The analogy falls short, however, in the very important practical fact that the work of Congress and the State Legislature is principally that



of legislation, while the work of municipal councils is of necessity principally that of administration. The theoretical independence and distinct executive responsibility of the President and the Governor is extremely difficult to maintain in practice, for the line between legislative and administrative work and authority is not at all distinct. Still more difficult is it in practice to apportion duties and responsibility between an American Mayor and the Common Council in such a way as to secure real efficiency on both sides. It is not easy to see where in the nature of things, the proper functions of one authority end, and those of the other begin. In the dispersion of authority, definite responsibility too easily disappears. The embarrassments and opportunities growing out of this divided responsibility are among the principal causes of the comparative failure of city government in the United States.

IN CALCUTTA THE AUTHORITY OF THE CORPORATION  
HAS ALWAYS BEEN SUPREME.

Here in Calcutta the authority of the Corporation has always been supreme since there has been a Corporation. This has been the constitution of the Municipality ever since 1863. Every time the constitution has come under consideration, this principal has been recognized. It was first affirmed by the Act of 1863; it was re-affirmed in 1876; it was again affirmed in 1888; and under this constitution the Municipality has introduced those vast and stupendous sanitary works which have changed the face of Calcutta. If we had a *tabula rasa* upon which we might inscribe what we pleased, there might have been some justification for the Bill now introduced. But a constitution is a growth—in the words of Edmund Burke, the greatest political philosopher the world has ever seen—it is an organic growth; and let me ask my Hon'ble friend the member in charge of the Bill whether he regards the Bombay Municipal Act as the natural and the most recent development of our Municipal system? If not, it is a foreign

body—an extraneous excrescence—sought to be engrafted upon our municipal system ; and as such it is doomed—fore-doomed to failure.

THE PROPOSED SYSTEM WILL BE A SOURCE OF OPPRESSION  
TO THE POOR.

Sir, I base my objection to the Bill upon the highest considerations of expediency. The Bill if passed into law would lead to the dispersion of all sense of responsibility and would operate as a hardship upon the poorer sections of the community, whose well-being ought to be the supreme concern of all Governments. Under the existing law the authority of the Corporation is supreme. To the Corporation, the Chairman and the General Committee are responsible. To whom will they be responsible under the new law? To none—they will be responsible only to their own consciences—the divine monitor within ; and, Sir, power vested in the best and the wisest amongst us is liable to be abused when adequate provision is not made for bringing home a sense of responsibility. There will, under the new law, be three co-ordinate authorities forming part and parcel of the same system, moving in their own appointed spheres, without any central or controlling force. Why, Sir, the material universe could not endure under such a system. The same principal dominates the world of man's actions. The Bill, as I have remarked, will be a source of oppression practised upon the poor. The Chairman cannot possibly perform all his vast and varied functions. He will have to delegate his duties to his subordinates in an endless chain. The executive will thus include the municipal underlings, and we know who and what they are. They are just as unpopular as the Police, and their purity is on a par with that of the Police. But they are far more meddlesome and mischievous. Their duties affecting the daily lives and habits of the people afford them the amplest opportunity for black-mailing. Now a remedy is provided by the appellate and revisional jurisdiction

of the Corporation which may be invoked by any Commissioner. *But when this power is taken away from the Corporation these underlings will be the virtual masters of the situation—the lords of all they survey—their right none to dispute,—and the lot of the poor man hard as it is in Calcutta, will become harder still.*

#### THE GENERAL COMMITTEE.

Sir, I desire to say one word with regard to the constitution and the powers of the General Committee. Under the present law the General Committee consists of 18 members elected by the Corporation and is responsible to the Corporation. Under the proposed law the General Committee will consist of 12 members, of whom only four will be elected by the Corporation. The General Committee will be entrusted with the details of administration in a variety of important matters. The Corporation will have to find the funds. The Corporation having under the new system no part in the actual work of administration and therefore unfamiliar with the requirements of the administration, may vote inadequate funds, and then the Government like the *deus ex machina* of the old dramas will descend on the scene to avert a crisis. Here we have an *imperium in imperio* with a vengeance, with all the worst evils of the system, accentuated in their gravest form. Let us hear what a Bombay paper,—which you, sir, very rightly described from your place in the Supreme Council as being distinguished for sobriety and moderation—the *Indian Spectator*—says with regard to this aspect of the Bill :—

The division is a queer one, involving a logical fallacy, for, are not merchants too residents? Our Standing Committee is elected by the Corporation, as a whole, and so there is no friction. The General Committee, as sketched out in the words of Sir A. Mackenzie, quoted above, would be, as it seems at first sight, an anomaly, an *imperium in imperio*, and the work of dividing the responsibilities between the two

bodies to be created on the one hand, and between them and the Chairman, on the other, would surely tax ingenuity. If the Budget and the rate of taxation is to be fixed by the Corporation, if the strings of the purse are to be in their hands exclusively, we do not see how a body that is not their representative can help becoming often a stumbling block in the way of smooth working.

#### THE COMMITTEES OF THE CORPORATION.

Sir, it has been said with regard to the Committees of the Corporation that they hamper work and cause delay. The statement is founded upon an entire misconception of the situation. These committees facilitate work and avoid a good deal of discussion which otherwise would inevitably take place at meetings of the Commissioners. In 19 cases out of 20, said Sir Henry Harrison from his place in this Council, the decisions of Committees are accepted without any discussion. Nor do these committees cause any delay when the Chairman is in agreement with them, and this is usually the case; for then his proposals may at once be given effect to. In this connection there is one aspect of the question which this Council cannot overlook and which I am sure your honour will not overlook when we bear in mind the eloquent words which you addressed as Home Secretary to the various local Governments, impressing upon them the importance of fostering the beginnings of Local Self-Government, as an instrument of popular and political education. These committees familiarise the Commissioners with the work of the Corporation, inspire them with a sense of responsibility and promote the ends of political education.

Lastly the Government has assumed to itself functions which do not belong to it under the present law. I thought, Sir, that decentralization was the order of the day. But I presume it is decentralization when power is to be delegated to officials or official bodies, and it is centralization when power has to be withdrawn from popular bodies. Here is a

*statement which I have drawn up showing the powers and functions which the Government has assumed under the proposed law :—*

Under the present law the Local Government can take action direct and of its own motion in 20 cases. Under the proposed law the Local Government can take action direct and of its own motion in 32 cases. The new powers given to Local Government among others, are :—

- (1) To appoint 4 members to the General Committee.
- (2) To fix the salary of the Chairman.
- (3) To appoint Deputy-Chairman and fix his salary.
- (4) To grant leave of absence to Chairman and Deputy-Chairman.
- (5) To remove a Commissioner's disqualification by an order of the Local Government.
- (6) To make rules prescribing qualifications of candidates for employment in the Health Department, Engineering Department, Conservancy Department, also make rules providing for occasional or periodical inspection of any Department of the Corporation by officers of Government.
- (7) Resolutions of General Committees appointing sub-committees to be forwarded to Local Government.
- (8) Minutes of all proceedings of Corporation, General Committees and Sub-Committees to be sent to Local Government.
- (9) The Local Government may require Chairman to undertake execution of any work certified by a Secretary of the Government to be urgent for public service and for this purpose may make temporary payment from Municipal Funds.
- (10) If any difference of opinion arises between the General Committee and the Corporation touching Budget allotment, the Chairman shall refer the matter to Local Government and its decision to be final.

- (11) To exempt the owner or occupier of any building or land from payment of consolidated rate, if recommended by any two authorities.

#### CONCLUSION.

Sir, I do not propose to detain you any longer. It is not for one moment to be supposed that I regard the present constitution of the Calcutta Municipality as perfect. Far from it. It is capable of improvements, but they do not lie in the directions indicated in the Bill. The Bill has been launched in the name of sanitation. Could we persuade ourselves to believe that it would promote sanitation and thus confer an unmixed benefit upon the people, what could be more natural than that we should support a measure, so wise in its scope—so beneficent in its intentions. For Calcutta is the city of our birth—it is the city of our sires—it is the city of our children—and it is to be the destined city of our children's children. We have a far more permanent and abiding interest in its sanitary well-being than any other section of the community could possibly have. We would welcome any rational scheme of sanitation which would bring to our people an accession of health and all the blessings which the possession of health implies. But we are persuaded that this Bill will not promote this great object. It is not laws but funds that are needed for the structural improvements of Calcutta. We have had of recent years too many laws. We want rest, peace, the repose of peace, freedom from the excitement consequent upon new proposals for the enactment of new laws. It is money not a change in the constitution of the Municipality that is required for the sanitation of Calcutta. Sir, I speak not as an amateur or a theorist, but as one who has some practical familiarity with municipal work. I have spent the best part of my life-time in the service of the Corporation. I entered it when young. I have grown grey in its service. The work of the Corporation has been the pleasure and the pride of my life. I have

behind me an experience of nearly 25 years. Fortified by that experience, I venture to make an earnest appeal to you, Sir, whose name is so honourably associated with the great scheme of Local Self-Government, to abandon or at any rate largely to modify a measure which has filled the rate-payers of Calcutta with alarm, which will not promote the ends of sanitation, which will depreciate the value of property, disorganize the work of the Corporation and wreck the best prospects of Local Self-Government in the capital of the Indian Empire. Sir, I might put my case upon still higher considerations. Municipal institutions, said Mr. Gladstone, are the seed-plots upon which and around which are developed that political capacity and those habits of political thought which ought to be the supreme concern of all Governments to foster and to promote. Our municipal institutions are the gift of our rulers. We owe them to their beneficence. But they have taken firm root in our hearts and convictions, for they are in entire accord with our ancient traditions and the inherited instincts of our race, fostered by the Panchait system and our time-honoured village-organisations. We cherish them with reverence. The love and devotion of a people cling to them. They supplement our education ; for what nobler school could there be than the school of public affairs ! Their nobler seminaries inspire the people with a sense of responsibility, exercise a moderating influence upon their minds and enlist their sympathies on behalf of the Government. It would be most unwise, most unstatesman-like, in these days of political unrest and excitement, to do aught which would in the least impair the utility of these institutions or shake public confidence in them. We are the friends of sanitation ; but the worship of sanitation may be carried to the verge of idolatry. We agree with Sir Ashley Eden in thinking that a single case where native society is persuaded by conviction to adopt a sanitary reform is worth hundred cases where such reform is forced upon it by the pressure of external circumstances. Sir, greatly as we value

sanitation we are not prepared to sacrifice our civil freedom for its sake, especially when such a sacrifice is unnecessary and uncalled for, and when it will prove disastrous to the fortunes of our people in other, higher and nobler directions.

## DACCA CONFERENCE

### IN MOVING THE RESOLUTION ON PLAGUE MEASURES.

Babu Surendra Nath Banerjea said :—

Mr. President, brother-delegates, ladies and gentlemen ;—

My first duty is, as one of the oldest of the delegates, to tender our acknowledgments to the citizens of Dacca for the cordial reception and the princely hospitality of which we have been the recipients for the last few days. Great were the misgivings when it was announced that the Conference would be held at Dacca. Considerable disappointment has been felt in all quarters that Dacca has not asserted its own in the public movements which mark the life of this generation. All these doubts and misgivings must now be dissipated in the light of accomplished facts. Dacca has poured forth her soul in one great act of princely hospitality. She is ablaze with patriotic fervour and devotion. The Conference has been a great success. I desire to congratulate the people of Dacca on their magnificent achievement. I desire to congratulate them on the awakened public spirit, of which this success is the symbol and the index. God grant that this spirit may grow and deepen to the lasting honour of the citizens of Dacca and the permanent benefit of the people of East Bengal.

Turning now to the Resolution before us, we are reminded of the words of the great Puritan bard—when stricken down by blindness and persecuted by his enemies—the last relic of a great age—the sole survivor of a race of heroes—



he exclaimed amid the passionate agonies of his great soul, "we are fallen upon evil times and upon evil tongues and by darkness and danger compassed round." It seems—such is our situation—as if the powers of nature had entered into an unholy combination against man and the interests of man—as if the primitive struggle between man and the elemental forces—a struggle which is co-existent with the history of the human race—was about to enter upon a new and a more acute phase—when man having vanquished his ancient enemies must now renew the contest with a foe, more insidious and more deadly than any which has hitherto taxed his energies or called forth his illimitable resources. Perplexed and bewildered by these reflections, lost in the contemplation of the awful solemnity of the situation, we involuntarily turn our eyes away from mundane affairs and raise them heavenward for such light and guidance as may be vouchsafed to us from on high, so that we may be in a position to meet the crisis in a manner befitting the citizens of the greatest empire in the world and avert a calamity which bids fair to settle upon our fortunes with the deepening shadows of ever-lasting night.

The Resolution speaks of the gratitude we feel to the Government of Bengal—especially to the honoured head of that Government—for the sympathetic policy which the Government has adopted in dealing with the plague. Is this a mere empty phrase—or does it represent a deliberate conviction on our part—does it find a counterpart in our feelings? There is too great a tendency in these days to show our gratitude to high officers of Government, sometimes for no service, and sometimes even for positive disservice done. Why, Sir, only the other day, a great Association, possessed of venerated traditions, with a brilliant record of distinguished services, connected with the honoured names of Ram Gopal Ghose, Hurrish Chunder Mookerjee and Kristo Das Pal, so far forgot its traditions as to present a farewell address to a retiring Lieutenant-Governor, whose only claims to our

gratitude lay—firstly in his use of offensive language in relation to some of our most cherished institutions, secondly in the enactment of a law which deprived the tenants in the Government Khas Mahals of a valued right, and lastly in the introduction into the local Council of a measure which if passed into law would deal a heavy and irreparable blow at the institution of Local Self-Government in the capital of the Indian Empire. Personally I have great respect for the gentlemen who took part in this ceremony—some of them are my personal friends—but I am bound to say that they prostituted their functions, debased the traditions of a great public body, by singing the praises of a ruler who deserved blame rather than praise. There is indeed too great a tendency in these days to bend the knee and burn the incense of adulation at the altar of greatness. The worship of greatness, I do not deprecate. Greatness, be it intellectual, moral or spiritual, is worthy of the homage and reverence of man. Greatness such as is exemplified in the personality of the representative of our august Sovereign is entitled to our loyalty as dutiful subjects of the Crown. But whether the representative of the Sovereign shall, in addition to the allegiance to which he is entitled by virtue of his office, have a claim upon our love and gratitude must depend upon him and his measures. It is love, sympathy, good works that bind the hearts of the ruled to the rulers as if with a triple chain of gold. It is these qualities, I am happy to be able to say, which distinguish the policy of Sir John Woodburn in dealing with the plague. He has enthroned himself in the hearts of the people—and I will say this on your behalf as well as on my own behalf that if these qualities distinguish his administration in regard to all other questions, he will take his place amongst the most sympathetic and therefore among the wisest of Indian rulers. Sir John Woodburn was instrumental in averting a great calamity which would have been inevitable, if Sir Alexander Mackenzie was Lieutenant-Governor. In June 1897 Sir Alexander Mackenzie

addressed a communication to the Government of India, forwarding a report made by Dr. Lowson, an expert from Hongkong. In this letter, the late Lieutenant-Governor suggested that the rules relating to segregation should be made more rigorous and that home-segregation which had been allowed by the Government of Sir Anthony MacDonald should be disallowed. Sir Alexander Mackenzie received a rebuff, the like of which in the whole course of my experience I had never seen administered to the head of a Provincial Government. He was told in reply that Dr. Lowson was in no sense the exponent of the views of the Government of India and that he was not authorized to speak in the name of that Government—that further the question of segregation was one which had to be determined not merely by reference to sanitary conditions but by reasons of a political and administrative character; and above all, considerations of humanity were to have a predominant place in the councils of the Government. The letter went on to say that having regard to the fatal character of the disease, it was inhuman to separate the husband from the wife and the wife from the husband. Sir John Woodburn was then Home Member, guiding and controlling the domestic policy of the Government of India. Are we not therefore justified in holding that it was he who inspired this letter? If so, we are equally justified in concluding that between the Government of Bengal and the Government of India, there is no difference of opinion whatsoever in regard to plague matters and the rumours to which certain newspapers gave credence as to the intended resignation of Sir John Woodburn, were absolutely without any foundation. In judging of the policy of the Government of Bengal in regard to the plague we must turn to the provisions of the Venice Convention. This was an agreement which was arrived at in March 1897 between eighteen European Powers who signed the Convention. It was agreed among them that they should notify to each other the existence of the plague within their respective

jurisdictions and the measures taken to prevent the spread of the infection. Among the measures insisted upon were disinfection, isolation and segregation. Now mark the contrast between the policy of the Government of Bengal and that of the Government of Bombay in regard to the measures for notification. Here in Bengal the notification is done by whom? By the members of the ward Committees—the representatives of the people. In Bombay, the Police and the Military were associated with the search-parties—and I regret to have to say that in Poona, the summer capital of the Western Presidency, European soldiers were employed on this duty. No graver mistake could have been committed by the Government of Lord Sandhurst. Lord Sandhurst may do his best to white-wash his policy in this respect and obtain certificates of good conduct for these European soldiers from high authority; but all the prestige and the splendour of his great position will not avail to avert the merited sentence of condemnation which history will pronounce upon this part of his policy. In Bengal our search-parties consist of the representatives of the people. They are not armed with instruments for breaking open the neighbours' houses. The hospitable doors of their neighbours are flung wide open for their reception. Moral persuasion and not military force is their weapon for the performance of their duties; and it has been found to be amply sufficient. The President referred yesterday in eloquent terms to the forces of repression which were abroad, and he alluded to the Calcutta Municipal Bill in support of his statement. Now one of the grounds upon which it was sought to justify the Bill is that the constitution of the Municipality is unequal to the strain of a grave and sudden emergency. I ask—could there be a graver crisis—a more sudden emergency than what has been caused by the plague, or at any rate the apprehension of the plague? But in dealing with the plague the Government has entrusted the representatives of the people with a duty, as delicate and as difficult as any that

can be thought of—viz. the duty of helping the Government to perform one of the most responsible functions, imposed upon the signatory powers by the terms of the Venice Convention. What then becomes of the plea that the representatives of the people charged with the work of a popular municipal constitution are unequal to the exigencies of a grave and sudden emergency? I have heard it said that cases are liable to be concealed under such a system of voluntary agency. I dispute the proposition. I say there is no concealment of cases—there can be no concealment, if the Ward Committees do their work honestly. You and I are likely to know more about our neighbours' affairs than any set of officials, however able and experienced. Has the honesty of Ward Committees or their desire to help the Government in this matter been ever doubted? Trust begets trust, and speaking as a member of a Ward Committee, I will say this—that we are anxious to reciprocate the confidence which has been reposed in us by the Government, and we are resolved by every means in our power to show ourselves worthy of it. This is the feeling which animates the Ward Committees throughout Calcutta. Again unlike what they had in Bombay, home-segregation and segregation in gardens have been allowed here, subject to the sites being approved by the medical authorities. In the rules effecting the mofussil published in February last, home-segregation is not allowed. But my Mofussil friends may be quite sure that any concession which is made to the people of Calcutta is bound in the nature of things to be extended to them. Further I have a piece of good news to communicate to you. I have the best reasons for believing that all plague rules and the measures taken in hand in connection with the mofussil have been suspended. There is no occasion for alarm or panic. Nothing will be done in haste—nothing in defiance of popular usage and customs. But let me ask—how many will be affected by the concession of home-segregation? It will benefit the few but not the many. The poorest of the

poor, the resident of our huts—they have no terraces or gardens which they may set apart for hospitals. The concession will not benefit them, and yet they are the people who are most likely to be attacked by the disease, for the plague is essentially the poor man's disease—it is born in poverty and bred in the filth which poverty creates in our large cities. This Conference is the Conference of the rich and the poor alike—much more is it the Conference of the poor than of the rich. We are here to ventilate their grievances and to give voice to the voiceless, and on behalf of the humblest and of the poorest section of our countrymen, we appeal to our rulers to dispense with segregation in their case, or at any rate to enforce it under conditions which would be in accordance with national usages and customs. It is not for one moment to be imagined that we are unfamiliar with segregation or isolation in connection with infectious diseases. The sentiment upon which the practice is based is as old as the hills and is graven deep on the instincts of our race. Small-pox is a virulently infectious disease, almost as infectious as the plague. (Babu Ananda Chunder Roy—more infectious.) Perhaps so. Now what do we do on the occurrence of a case of small-pox in any of our families? Why, we isolate the patient and segregate the rest of the inmates of the house. We keep the patient in a separate room to which all access is refused to the other members of the family. The barber and the washer-man do not come to the house. No alms are given; no visits are paid. No invitations are issued or received. For all practical purposes the family is completely segregated. Now if we have to isolate or segregate, is it not wise and statesmanlike to enlist on its side the authority of immemorial usage and the habits of thought and the prejudices which immemorial usage has created? And after all is segregation practicable in an oriental city? Dr. Cook, the Health Officer of Calcutta, and Dr. Weir, the Health Officer of Bombay, are doubtful as to its expediency. Dr. Cook has observed in an official com-

munication that it is unsuited to the requirements of an oriental city, that it has failed in Bombay and that it is bound to fail in Calcutta. In a conversation I had with him he said "It is all very well to segregate men and women. But what about the rodents which carry the infection from street to street and from house to house? No human ingenuity has yet contrived any agency to control them."

The Resolution appeals to the Government to declare Calcutta a non-infected area. We take our stand upon the terms of the Venice Convention quoted in the Resolution which say that no locality is to be deemed infected merely on account of the importation into it of a few cases of plague which have led to no diffusion of the malady. This description is exactly applicable to Calcutta. The cases are few in number and show no tendency to cause wide-spread infection. In more than six weeks' time there have been only about seventy seizures with about fifty-five deaths among a population of at least six hundred thousand souls, making allowance for the recent exodus. Further the cases are imported. We have the highest authority in support of this view of the matter. The Hon'ble Mr. Risley, in reply to question asked by my colleagues and myself made a statement in the Bengal Council which bears out the view which I have ventured to put forward. The statement is important, and I will read an extract from it :—

"As I have already stated, no connection can be traced between the persons affected, all of whom are residents of Calcutta, and any travellers who have arrived from the areas now infected in the Bombay Presidency and the Punjab. All such travellers are most carefully inspected at Chausa and at Chakradharpur. Their Railway tickets are punched with a peculiar mark before they leave the infected area, and persons holding such tickets are kept under observation throughout the journey and for ten days after their arrival in Calcutta. No suspicious cases have been discovered among the persons from Bombay and the Punjab who are now under

observation here, and the Health Officer, after making special enquiry into the point, has been unable to trace any connection between the local cases and the arrival from infected areas. Rats, however, have been found dead in considerable numbers in the press-room of the East Indian Railway and in the godowns connected with the coasting trade with Bombay, and it is possible that the infection has been imported by these animals."

Thus in the opinion of the President of the plague commission, "it is possible that the infection has been imported by these animals" (rats). The cases being few, they being imported in the opinion of the highest authority in these matters, we have a right to appeal to the Government, taking our stand upon the terms of the Venice Convention, to declare the metropolis a non-infected area.

We base the appeal likewise on the highest considerations of expediency. Calcutta is in a panic. Panic succeeds panic, apparently in an endless series. To-day it is the inoculation scare—to-morrow it is the quarantine scare—the day after, it is the house-to-house inspection scare. Each scare adds an impetus to the exodus movement. The business of the town has come to a stand-still, and if this state of things continues for any length of time, Calcutta will have received a shock to her trade and commerce and her growing prosperity such as she has never felt during the whole course of her existence as the capital of the Indian Empire, and from which it will take long to recover. (Mr. Kemp—"Calcutta will never recover from the shock.")

But after all have we got the plague? I have no desire to go behind the opinions of experts. I have no right to do so. You would not support me were I to do so. We are bound in a matter like this to defer to the judgment of experts, conversant with the technicalities of their art. But it is quite possible to hold that the experts were right and yet there is no plague in Calcutta. In our present state of knowledge the bacteriological test is the best and the safest,—it is



in-<sup>deed</sup> the only test that we possess. The only case that was subjected to this test was the Kapalitolla case. Since then in no instance has the blood of a patient been subjected to microscopical examination. The cases are only suspected cases of plague. They may or may not be cases of the true bubonic type. At least in one instance a case which had been entered as a case of suspected plague turned out upon enquiry to be merely a case of tonsillitis. That happened in my ward and I am personally cognizant of the facts. In the returns, I think it was on the 14th May last, I found that a case of suspected plague was entered against my ward. (ward no. XIV) I obtained the particulars from the Municipal Office, and sent one of the Secretaries to the parents of the child (a Eurasian girl, named Mildred Andrews) to make enquiries. The Secretary reported that according to the testimony of the girl's mother it was a case of simple fever. I placed myself in communication with the Health Officer and obtained through him the official report of the Medical College Hospital to which the patient had been admitted. And what do you think were the terms of the report? The doctor in attendance said it was a case of follicular tonsillitis! In the plague returns it had been entered as a case of suspected plague. There may be other cases of the kind. The whole thing is unsatisfactory, without the only crucial test that we have in these cases—the bacteriological test.

Assuming, however, for argument's sake that we have the plague in our midst, what a fierce and glaring side-light it throws upon the internal situation of the country! Our rulers are never tired of congratulation themselves on the growing prosperity and the increasing wealth of the country under British rule. But what becomes of this boast when viewed in the light of this terrible visitation which is peculiarly the scourge of poverty-stricken countries! The plague used to decimate Europe in the middle ages. Since 1660, London has been free from the plague, chiefly because the material condition of the people has so immensely improved.

The internal condition of the people, their prosperity or otherwise has an intimate bearing upon the existence of the disease. This is what Dr. Whyte of the Indian Medical Service wrote in an official report on the prevalence of the plague in Kurachi in 1820 :

“ All of the countries above-named agree in one general circumstance, and that is, that the inhabitants enjoy a less degree of that internal comfort, contentment, prosperity, peace of mind, which constitute the sum of human happiness (speaking generally) than of those of the countries which are exempted from the ravages of this disease (Plague). England probably is indebted to her improved condition, in the general diet and manners of the people, for its long exemption, and the other countries will be equally safe, when their internal situation shall be improved.”

But plague or no plague, we owe a solemn duty to ourselves in the present juncture. It is a crisis that tests the manhood of a community. To me no spectacle has been more disappointing than the panic-stricken condition of some of our educated country-men. I have seen them running away from Calcutta at the height of the scare, to come back, only to run away again. I have seen them accepting the wildest rumours and the most baseless stories without the slightest examination or scrutiny. What is more our women have exhibited greater courage, firmness and judgment than the educated representatives of the sterner sex. I blame no one. Their education is partly responsible. The Government is still more responsible. If the Government had afforded them ampler opportunities for familiarising themselves with public affairs, such knowledge and experience would have bred in them habits of thought such as would have been useful to the State at such a crisis. Even in matters of Government it is true that what is morally right is politically sound, and in this world of God's Providence the scriptural text that righteousness exalteth a nation is even commercially remunerative. However that may be, let

us realize the fact that we have a solemn duty which the situation imposes upon us, viz., to confront the crisis manfully and teach others to confront it manfully. God grant that we may be spared this terrible visitation ! God grant that if the plague should unhappily break out here, it may not rage with the epidemic virulence with which it decimated the towns of Western India. But if the worst comes to the worst, let us meet the crisis with courage and resolution, and if need be, let us die like men in the effort. Here, at any rate, there is no antagonism of interest as between race and race, between class and class, between the rulers and the ruled—here, no matter whether we are Hindus or Mahomedans, Christians or Sikhs or Parsis—no matter what may be our religious convictions or our social usages or our political creed—we are all united by a sense of common danger, resolved to do battle against a common enemy which if it once obtains a foot-hold in our country will dislocate our trade, disorganize our industries, shut up our schools and colleges and spread ruin and desolation over the fair face of our ancient land—the land of our birth, the home of our sires, the destined home of our children's children, associated in our minds with a thousand dear, tender, and affectionate remembrances.

## MADRAS CONGRESS, 1898.

### WELCOME TO LORD CURZON.

The Hon'ble Babu Surendranath Banerjea said :—

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, I have the honour to move the following resolution :—

That this Congress accords a respectful welcome to Lord Curzon, notes with gratitude his Lordship's words of sympathy for the people of India, and trusts the policy of progress and confidence in the people which has characterised

the best traditions of British rule in this country will be followed during his Lordship's tenure of office in India, and authorizes the President to wire the foregoing Resolution to His Lordship at Bombay.

Brother-Delegates, I wish this resolution had been a little more specific and had entered a little more into those outlines of policy which it is a matter of the first importance that we should at the earliest opportunity lay prominently before the coming Viceroy. With this reservation I will say that I cannot think of a resolution more appropriate, more suitable to the circumstances in which we find ourselves, or one more entirely in conformity with the temper and the genius of this great national gathering. We are the loyal representatives of a thoroughly loyal and law-abiding people, (*Hear, hear*) and as such, it is our duty and our privilege alike to accord a cordial greeting to the representative of our august Sovereign, (*cheers*) a Sovereign whose reign has been an era of unmingled beneficence and progress, whose domestic virtues and personal worth, the noblest adornments of exalted rank, have shed a lustre even upon the grandest throne in the world. (*cheers*.) Has our character for loyalty ever been disputed or our right to approach the Sovereign impugned? A dark cloud of suspicion hung for some little time over a certain section of our countrymen in the Western Presidency in relation to certain recent events. So exalted a functionary as the Secretary of State from his place in Parliament had declared that an organised conspiracy had been formed among a certain section of the people of Poona (*shame*) with a view to subvert British rule. That suspicion, that dark cloud of suspicion has now been dispelled by the light of accomplished events. The Judge who tried Damodar Chapekar has distinctly declared from the Bench that the evidence has not disclosed the shadow of a shade of suspicion in support of the conspiracy theory, which must now disappear like the baseless fabric of a vision. (*Hear, hear*.) No, Sir, we are loyal, intensely loyal, loyal from senti-

ment, loyal from conviction, loyal from immemorial usage, loyal from deep-rooted anxiety for the well-being of future generations. (*Cheers*). The sentiment is there rooted in our heart of hearts, accentuated and intensified by the highest considerations of expediency ; for we recognise the truth—recognise it with all the warmth and fervour of our ardent oriental temperaments—we recognise the truth that with the permanence of British rule in India are bound up the best prospects of our political advancement, our continued progress along those lines which are most conducive to our happiness, most conducive to the free and adequate developement of those faculties which, in the fulness of time and under the ordering of Providence, will ensure to our people their destined place amongst the nationalities of the earth. (*Cheers*). No doubt, now and then there are deviations on the part of our rulers from the straight path of duty—temporary fluctuations—doubts and misgivings followed by the adoption of a reactionary policy. But these are passing aberrations like the eccentricities of the planets which soon resume their normal course in obedience to an inexorable law which secures to the universe its order, its beauty and its harmony. I am sorry I have to say it—but say I must—that at the present moment our rulers are passing through a temporary frenzy. (Mr. Wacha—influenza). My friend Mr. Wacha calls it influenza. I accept the emendation. But whatever it be—be it frenzy or be it influenza—no matter by what term we choose to call it—it will soon disappear in the pursuit of a beneficent policy. It is in this hope and in this confidence that we approach the representative of our Sovereign. I am not deterred—no, not even deterred for a moment—by the objection that was raised sometime ago by a high functionary, the highest in India—Lord Dufferin—that we are a microscopic minority. If that is a disability, we suffer from it in common with our rulers. They also are a microscopic minority, (Laughter)—a meer speck in the vast ocean of Indian interests—and if a microscopic minority may rule,

a microscopic minority may also represent the bulk of their Countrymen. (*Cheers.*) But whether a microscopic minority or not, we are the representatives of our countrymen, the elect of the people, chosen by a diviner mandate than that which belongs to any ruling authority ; for those whom we seek to represent are the bone of our bone, the flesh of our flesh, people speaking the same language and breathing the same sentiments, worshipping the same God, nurtured amid the same traditions and aspirations (*Cheers*). If we cannot represent them, then who else can ? (*No, No*) We the much-despised educated community of India, are the natural leaders of the unenlightened masses, and therefore we have a right to approach the representative of our Sovereign. Our cordial greeting to him has about it the elements of universality, for it embodies the judgment of the entire country, the Congress being the representative body which reflects the sentiments and feelings of the great Indian community. (*Cheers*). The resolution speaks of the words of sympathy which Lord Curzon has professed for the people of India. Sympathy is the key-note of the many utterances of his Lordship since he has been designated to his high office. At one of the great meetings held almost immediately after the announcement of his appointment, he made use of these words, "I love India, its people, its history, its Government, the complexities of its civilization and its life." At another meeting he said that the essential qualifications of a Viceroy of India were "courage and sympathy." And at a third meeting, (I am not giving you the dates which are not necessary, but the facts can be verified)—at a third meeting he spoke of the interests of India as being sacred to him. Now I ask, Brother-Delegates, how many of you regard those interests, the interests of your mother-land as sacred, and how many of you that regard them in that light are prepared to treat them as such and to sanctify them by the touch of a higher reverence ? (*Cries of All*) Yes, our country is sacred. To us it is the land of our sires conse-

crated by their ashes, endeared to us by a thousand tender associations—it is the land of our birth—it is the destined inheritance of our children and our children's children. It recalls to mind the past—the dim misty past, when India was peopled by the Vedic *Rishis* of old, who in the morning of the world sang those hymns which represent the first yearnings of infant humanity towards the divine ideal. It recalls the past ; it places us in touch with the present ; it embraces the future. The past, the present, the future blend together in one mighty majestic stream rolling onwards to the borders of eternity (*Cheers*. The procession of the ages pass before us in mute silence. The splendid achievements of the past, the dismal failures of the present, the brilliant possibilities of the future, all lie revealed to our astonished gaze. A Viceroy who is able to touch our imagination in this fashion, people it with images so consolatory and yet so suggestive, at once so soothing to our sense of national self-respect and so pregnant with ideals of reform, Mr. President, I venture to submit, is entitled to the lasting gratitude of our countrymen. (*Cheers*). Well, Sir, I think I speak the sense of this Congress, and I will venture to add, of the country at large, if I say that it is our earnest hope and prayer that when Lord Curzon retires from his high office after his administration, the regrets of a great community may follow him to his distant home and that his name may be inseparably linked in our minds with the names of the greatest of Anglo-Indian Statesmen and administrators whose memories excite and will continue to excite, to remotest ages, the gratitude of our people—the names of a Bentinck, a Canning and a Ripon. (*Cheers*.)

Sir, the Resolution expresses the hope that Lord Curzon during his Viceroyalty may adopt a policy of beneficence and progress, illustrative of the best traditions of the British Government. It is this policy which is the proudest monument of British rule. It is its strongest bulwark in times of difficulty and danger. Well, Sir, when we express the hope that Lord Curzon may adopt a policy of progress and

beneficence we make a suggestion. We suggest that a different policy is now being followed. We go further and we say the reverse of a policy of progress is now being pursued (*Laughter.*) Lord Curzon is astute enough to read between the lines, and I only wish that we were astute enough to be a little more outspoken. (*Laughter.*) I do not not see why you should, in praising the august representative of our Sovereign, omit representing to him the grievances we suffer from. However that may be, that which with us is a matter of frequent complaint, is the inadequate attention bestowed by those responsible for the good Government of the country upon questions of domestic reform and improvement. I say the eyes of our rulers are exclusively fixed upon the frontiers. The spectre of Russian invasion haunts their imagination. (*Laughter.*) The gentlest breeze wafted across the Hindu-kush suggests to their excited imagination the Cossaks and their little ponies. The Russians have not come. They never will come, and if we are animated, as I hope and trust we shall always be, by sentiments of warm attachment to the British connection, then let them come—the brave hearts of a loyal people will offer the strongest bulwork against foreign invasion. (*Cheers.*) The frontier craze has assumed the proportions of a disease. It was not so fifteen or twenty years ago. It was not so ten years ago. Lord Ripon devoted the whole of his time and attention to the grave considerations of domestic policy and internal improvement. He repealed the Vernacular Press Act, extended the great principle of Lord Self-Government, and gave a wider impetus to the employment of natives of India in the higher offices under Government by appointing a distinguished countryman of ours, Sir R. C. Mitter, to the high office of Chief Justice of Bengal. When Lord Dufferin came, the frontier fever had taken firm possession of our rulers. (*Laughter.*) But still he found time to appoint the Public Service Commission, and also to recommend the expansion of the Legislative Councils. In the days of Lord Lansdowne



the fever had reached almost its culminating point. None the less Lord Lansdowne was able to give partial effect to the recommendations of the Public Service Commission and to enlarge the Councils and reconstitute them upon a somewhat representative basis. Show me a single measure of domestic reform or improvement which has distinguished the reign of the retiring Viceroy. I am unable to find it. (Cries of "No, No") You may, but I am unable to find it. ("No, No.") I read the newspapers and the current events with considerable interest and attention, because I am paid to read them, being the Editor of a newspaper. I do not make this a matter of complaint. Far be it from me to say one word by way of disparagement in relation to the noble man for whose personal worth I have the greatest possible respect and who in the course of the next few days will have laid down the reins of his great office. But there is the broad fact that not a single measure of reform has distinguished the Viceroyalty which is about to close. No doubt there were great difficulties in his way—difficulties created by the famine and the plague—but the spirit of reform is always watchful and always ready to assert itself at the earliest possible opportunity, and let it be borne in mind that it was amid the dark days of the Indian Mutiny, when the Empire was being shaken to its very foundations by one of the most direful tragedies enacted on the stage of Indian History, that the Universities of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay were established by the orders of Sir Charles Wood, who was then Secretary of State for India. Our hope and prayer is that Lord Curzon may devote greater attention to the internal Government of the country with the result that it may be his lasting glory and honour to settle once for all the grave financial complications which are fast gathering round the Government of India; for the fact cannot be too often repeated that it is upon the soundness of the financial position—my friend Mr. Wacha sympathises with me—the structure of national prosperity must be made to rest. The financial

test is the crucial test. "Tell me," said Sir John Bright in one of his speeches, "what the financial position of a country is and I will tell you all about its Government and the condition of the people". Judged by this test we are deplorably wanting. Our resources are frittered away on the frontiers. The commonest domestic improvements have to be starved. The cash balances of the Provincial Governments have vanished almost to nothing. You know perfectly well—I am speaking of Bengal—that under the orders of the Secretary of State, the cash balance of that Province has to be maintained at the sum of 20 lakhs of Rupees. Last year what was the cash balance we had? Five lakhs, not twenty. Bombay was still worse. It had a big cipher as balance. (Laughter.) What does all this mean? It means the utter blasting of all hopes of improvement upon which the happiness, the contentment and the prosperity of the people depend. No amount of the financial jugglery in connection with the currency question will avail to remove the gravity of the situation. (*Hear, Hear.*) Firmness and decision and the comprehensive grasp of genuine statesmanship are the qualifications that are needed; and Lord Curzon promises to deal with this grave problem in this spirit, for I will quote what he said at one of the recent demonstrations held in his honour. He said, "India is ill-equipped with the material, industrial and educational resources which are so necessary to her career, and the Government should be so conducted that she may by slow and sure degree, expand to the full measure of her growth." She can only expand to the full measure of her growth if the financial position permits it.

Well, Gentlemen, I will not take up much more of your time. We pray that a policy of beneficence and confidence in the people may be inaugurated under Lord Curzon's auspices. We pray that the policy of reaction which finds favour with the Government of India at the present moment may be reversed. A wave of reaction is sweeping across the high places of the Government

and is infecting the Councils of the Empire. Even in England the same spirit has made itself felt. It is visible in the extinction, the practical extinction, of the Liberal party. In India, this spirit of reaction has inscribed one of the darkest chapters in our History, a chapter as black as any to be found in the dismal records of India, a chapter marked by such events as the incarceration of Mr. Tilak (*Shame*), the deportation of the Natu Brothers, the enactment of the Sedition Law, the installation of the Poona Press Committee, and last but not least, the preparation of the Calcutta Municipal Bill. (*Shame*) Gentlemen, I think I express the sense of the Congress and, I may add of the country too, when I say that we all rejoice that Mr. Tilak has been released (*Loud Cheers*). We should have still more rejoiced if he had not been convicted at all (*Cheer*), if that travesty of law and justice which was enacted 18 months ago had never been enacted. You will have a Resolution regarding the Natu Brothers and repeal of the Sedition Law. I call upon this Congress to repeat those resolutions year after year until the Act and the Regulations have been wiped off the Statute Book. (*Cheers*). As for the Poona Press Committee I know very little about it, except that it has been whispered to me that the object is a very noble and beneficent one. It is to pour into the ears of the benighted editors of the Native Press of Poona all the knowledge, all the information, all the wisdom which we know flows so spontaneously so gratuitously from official sources. (*Laughter*). If that be the object, why should we not have such committees in Madras? What have we done, what sins are we guilty of, that we should be thus condemned? But jest apart, the object is, I understand, not to instruct or to enlighten but to muzzle and to gag. If that be the object, we ought to protest against the measure in season and out of season. We do not want these committees. We can do without them. We have done without them for the last 100 years, and we shall be able to do without them for the next 100 years.

Now, Mr. President, with your permission and only for a few minutes let me draw your attention to the Calcutta Municipal Bill, in which I feel the strongest possible interest. Brother-Delegates, who enjoy the boon of Local Self-Government, we want your sympathy in our misfortune, your co-operation in the great struggle for civic freedom in which we are engaged at the present moment, and I am sure you will extend to us both that sympathy and that co-operation in the terrible crisis which has overwhelmed us. The Bill has filled the citizens of Calcutta with alarm and anxiety. Sir John Woodburn said from his place the other day in the Council Chamber that it is a perfectly innocuous measure and that it only means the re-adjustment and not the extinction of the system of Local Self-Government in Calcutta. For Sir John Woodburn personally I have the greatest possible respect. His is a charming personality. It is impossible to meet him without being impressed by the many great qualities of his head and heart. But in justice to myself I am bound to enter my protest against this view of the matter. What does Local Self-Government mean? If it means anything it means this—the administration of local concerns by the representatives of the local community. But when you take all power away from these representatives and vest it in the hands of the officials and their friends, what becomes of Local Self-Government? It is gone. It has ceased to exist. The object of the Bill is to transfer all authority from the representatives of the people and vest it in the official head of the executive who is a Government nominee, and in a General Committee the vast majority of whom—two thirds—are to be nominated by the Government and by the trading and mercantile communities. What is the justification for this revolutionary measure? Absolutely none. Have the Commissioners been tried and found wanting? On the contrary successive Lieutenant-Governors belonging to the most opposite schools and professing

party. He stands high above all parties, reconciling the jarring conflicts of opposing factions. No matter whether he is Whig or Tory, Liberal or Conservative, he stands pledged to no creed, no dogma, no doctrine, and save and except that which will preserve immaculate the sacred interests of India. He is above all the repository of British justice and British honour. Therefore with confidence do we appeal to Lord Curzon, that he will not permit a departure from the traditional policy of this realm, that he will preserve in the true spirit of Conservatism those canons of statesmanship which lie embalmed in the lives of distinguished Anglo-Indian rulers, and which, more than the armies of England more than her navy, more than her illimitable resources, have contributed to build, to expand and solidify this vast, this stupendous, this colossal fabric of imperial sway which while it excites the envy and admiration of foreigners, is regarded by us, the children of the soil, as an inscrutable dispensation of divine Providence ordained for the wisest, the noblest and the truest purposes of human history. (*Loud and continued cheers*).

## MADRAS CONGRESS.

### CONSTITUTION AND WORKING OF THE CONGRESS.

BABU SURENDRNATH BANERJEA, who on rising was received with enthusiastic cheering, said :—

Mr. President, Brother-Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, —Yesterday it was my duty, I will add my most painful duty, to make a complaint against the retrograde and reactionary policy of the Government of India. To-day it is my duty, and also my painful duty, to make a complaint though entirely of a different nature. My complaint is not against the Government of India, but it is against this Congress, and it is against my friends of the Congress, whose confidence, I am happy to say, I enjoy in such a large measure. I am here

Sir, in obedience to a mandate from the inexorable nature of which I could not possibly escape. When I came on the platform I had not the least intention of making a speech. Since I came to the platform I was asked to speak in regard to the resolution about Natu Brothers, then in regard to another resolution which followed, and lastly I was transfixed to the 1st resolution. Well, Sir, I am here in obedience to that mandate. I ask now, what is the object of this resolution? It is a most important resolution, a vital resolution, a resolution deeply affecting the truest and the most cherished interests of this great institution. The object of this resolution, as I take it, is the diffusion and dissemination among the unenlightened masses of the principle of the Congress. Sir, I have heard it said—heard with pain and astonishment—that we, the people of the Congress for the last 14 or 15 years, have done little or no work. I will claim this on behalf of the Congress, that we have never taken up a question which we have not brought within the range of practical politics or in regard to which we did not provide a sound and a completely satisfactory solution. We took up the question of the separation of the Judicial from the Executive functions, and we have brought it within the range of practical politics. We took up the question of Police reform. The Police in Bengal has been partially reformed. (*Cheers.*) We took up the question of the wider employment of our people in the public service of this land; and the wider employment of our countrymen in the public service of India has partially been carried out. Last but not least, we took up the question of reform and expansion of the Councils, and the Councils have been enlarged and reconstituted upon a partially representative basis. But we have done something more. The subjective triumphs of the Congress are even more significant than the objective triumphs. We have brought all the Indian races upon the same common platform, and have inspired them with a common sentiment of patriotism to our motherland. (*Cheers.*) We have filled them with a lofty ardour and devo-

tion to live and suffer, and if need be, to die for the benefit and glory of the land. Is any achievement of any institution in modern times comparable to this vast, stupendous, phenomenal achievement of ours? I am surprised that Congress men should bring a charge of this kind. Of course I expected the *Times* to repeat this hackneyed charge again and again whenever it finds an opportunity. That great friend of ours, Reuter, has telegraphed to this country for the edification of the Anglo-Indian public the adverse comments of the *Times* in regard to your speech, Sir, the day before yesterday, that speech to which we listened with wrapt attention, intense interest and admiration. The speech has been described as vague, indefinite, and making no specific complaints. (*Cries of "Shame."*) So much for the truthfulness of the *Times* writer, and then the *Times* from facts proceeds to opinions. The *Times* says the Congress movement is on the wane. The Congress movement on the wane! Let the writer of that mendacious paragraph come here and witness with his eyes this great, this majestic assembly representing the wisdom, the intelligence, and the capacity of educated India. (*Cheers.*) He will find whether the Congress movement is on the wane or not. The Congress movement on the wane! Why, Sir, what does the Resolution of to-day propose? Namely that an organisation is to be started at once for the wider diffusion of those principle which are so dear to us. We are not content with keeping the light to ourselves. We say: "Let the light spread board-cast, let it radiate forth throught the length and breadth of this land, illuminate it with its splendour, glory and its beneficence." We want the gospel principles of the Congress, tidings of great joy, to be communicated to the humblest resident of the meanest cottage. Are these indications of a declining movement? Sir, at the same time, I am prepared to admit that much remains to be done. We are not perfect. No human institution is perfect. Not even the Government of India is perfect (*Laughter.*) It lays claim to infallibility. Those claims may be right or they may not

be right. But at any rate we in the Congress are prepared to admit that much remains to be done so far as our work is concerned. And this resolution, with which I have been entrusted, makes provision for that work. The resolution is divided into two parts. In the first place it provides for the appointment of agents. These agents are to be appointed by whom? Appointed by the Central Committee. The object of the appointment of these agents is the propagation of the Congress principles. The Central Committees do not exist now. A Central Committee exists only in Madras. As I said last night at the meeting of the Subjects Committee, I may say with regard to the backwardness of Madras, that Madras can teach us many lessons which the more pretentious Presidencies will do well to learn; and one of these lessons is the lesson of constitution in regard to the various organisations which Madras takes in hand. Madras has the instinct of statesmanship about it. (*Laughter.*) The moment it takes up a cause, it starts an organisation. Madras looks around with spectacles and asks, "Where is the constitution? Where are the rules? Are these rules practicable or impracticable? Are these rules fair and equitable? Will they carry out the ends for which they are destined? These are the practical questions which suggest themselves to the Madrasee. He solves them in his own luminous way. Well, Madras has already got a Central Committee. I was not aware of it until last night. On board the *Bancura* we thought, 20 or 30 Delegates that were gathered together, we were going with a great secret in our bosoms, we were going to communicate to the members of the Madras Presidency and also to the members of other Presidencies this splendid idea, this inspiration so to speak, of Central Committee; and when we led this idea before the Subjects Committee, lo and behold to our astonishment, we discovered that there was a Central Committee at Madras. There is to be this Central Committee. This Central Committee is to supply the motive power; but Central Committees



do not exist except in Madras as I have said. How are they to be brought forth into existence? The various Standing Congress Committees in the different metropolitan centres are to create a Central Committee, and then the Congress is to exercise a sort of revisional jurisdiction by the submission of reports which are to be laid before the Central Committee. Such in brief is the first part of the resolution. The second part of the resolution refers to the form of the constitution. I do not know how often we have discussed it how many pledges we have made in regard to it. I do not know how many pledges we have broken regarding it. In 1887 from this platform—it might not have been in Hyde Park,—a resolution was put forward by my friend Mr. Ghosal, the nestor of the Congress movement, to the effect that all Standing Congress Committees are to be required to submit a draft constitution before the next meeting of the Congress. The next meeting of the Congress was held in 1888. Next to 1888 we have had 10 meetings but not in one of them was a report regarding the constitution submitted by any Standing Congress Committee. Sir, we are tired of repeating a particular charge against the Government of this country in season and out of season. We are complaining that the Government of India has made most solemn promises and has broken those promises. (*Laughter.*) Might not the same charge be now flung into our teeth? (*A cry of "Shame."*) Of course that is a most shameful matter, but a part of that shame sticks to you, my dear Sir. (*Laughter.*) I think it is a most shameful thing that we should hear and talk of the supremacy of the moral law, professing our assured belief as we did yesterday, that those laws were destined to triumph in a world of God's Providence, and then go home and sleep over those promises which we have made. I can conceive nothing more shameful than that. Brother-Delegates, let there be a departure this year. Let us resolve in our heart of hearts, take a solemn vow enter into a solemn league and covenant, that this resolution which we accept to-day shall

be loyally adhered to and loyally given effect to. What are your difficulties? Why should we not be able to propagate our principle amongst the masses? Why should we not be able to send deputations to England to instruct the enlightened British people and the masses, the masters of the destinies of the whole of India? What are the difficulties? Is not money forthcoming or are men wanting? Have we no money? This rich country, the fabled land of wealth, no money among a population of three hundred millions of souls. (*Cries of "We have"*). Why, if we subscribe a cowrie each, we could have 50 lakhs. It is not that we have no money. We have not men. We are wanting in self-sacrifice, devotion, ardour and enthusiasm, which a case like this demands at our hands. Have we not missionaries in this cause? Read the history of the world. Twelve illiterate fishermen of Nazareth, fired with the divine ardour and divine afflatus, ignorant and illiterate, unable to speak a learned dialect, have created a most astonishing revolution that the world has ever witnessed. Have we not twelve men amongst us who will take a solemn vow even now at this moment, at this Congress meeting, that, during the next 12 months, they will devote their lives, their time, their attention, their resources, their all, to the services of that motherland whose glory, Sir, you described in such eloquent terms on the last occasion? (*Cheers*). You cheer me; I am not concerned about cheering. I want men. Will not that gentleman who cried shame come forward now? I want men. I will go on repeating until I have the men. It is a matter of most serious concern—the men ought to be forthcoming. Look at these Brahmins of Poona, their magnificent self-sacrifice and devotion; look at their splendid work, the Ferguson College; look at the self-denying men the members of the Aryan Samaj, who founded the Vedic Institution and their magnificent sacrifice. A cause that is to prosper needs such sacrifice. We want such sacrifice from you. It is no use your coming here once in 12 months, passing resolutions,

cheering speakers, returning home and going to sleep. You must really make up your minds to do solemn, earnest and devoted work. You must really make up your minds to sacrifice yourselves even if it be for twelve months. The pursuit of money is fascinating ; but the pursuit of a great ideal for the glorification of one's motherland is holy and inspiring. May God, the Giver of all good intentions, may He vouchsafe to this assembly, the spirit, the fervour, the enthusiasm, and the energy which we need so much for the attainment of the glorious ends of the Congress ! May the heavenly inspiration descend on this assembly, may Thou, God of nations, vouchsafe Thy light, Thy spirit, Thy inspiration, so that we may be led on by Thee to do that work which is Thine and our work—the salvation of our motherland, the land which is the land of our birth, that land which is the land of our sires, and that land which free and emancipated we propose to leave to our descendants, even unto remote generations ! May you think over the matter, may you think of the patriotic fervour and enthusiasm for the benefit of your country and the glorification of your God !  
*(Loud and continued cheers.)*

## LUCKNOW CONGRESS.

### CALCUTTA MUNICIPAL ACT.

BABU SURENDRANATH BANERJEA SAID :—

Mr. President, Brother-Delegatès, Ladies and Gentlemen,—I have the honour to move this resolution :—

Resolution VII.—That this Congress expresses its disapproval of the reactionary policy, subversive of Local Self-government, as evidenced by the passing of the Calcutta Municipal Act, in the face of the unanimous opposition of the people of India, and by the introduction into the Legislative Council of Bombay of a similar measure which will

have the effect of seriously jeopardising the principle of Local Self-government.

Sir, when last year we met in Congress in the town of Madras we ventured to express the hope that it might be our privilege to associate the name and fame of Lord Curzon with the reversal of that policy of repression and reaction which is now in the ascendant in the Councils of the Empire. I cannot say that that hope has been realised. I am bound to say that that hope has not been realised. For within the last twelve months we have had two notable illustrations of this policy of repression in the enactment of the Calcutta Municipal Bill and in the introduction into the Legislative Council of Bombay of a measure which will emasculate the principle of Local Self-government in the towns of Western India (*hear, hear*). But, Sir, I think I speak the sense of this great Congress, the sense of the representatives of educated India, when I say that we distinctly decline to associate Lord Curzon with that policy which our conscience has disapproved and our judgment condemned (*hear, hear*). In free and constitutional countries the sovereign stands isolated and apart from the conflict of parties and the bitterness of feelings which these conflicts awaken. The sovereign belongs to no party, is identified with no class interest (*hear, hear*), the sovereign stands high above all parties, the jarring note of party strife does not reach his ears (*cheers*). From his exalted position animated by that inspiration which such a position cannot fail to impart he holds the scales evenly and dispenses impartial justice between man and man and party and party. (*cheers*). The position of the Viceroy of India is different. As the representative of the sovereign, he is the fountain of mercy, the repository of honour, the dispenser of justice (*hear, hear*) but there is also another side to his character. He is the first, the most trusted, the highest, the most responsible minister of the crown (*cheers*), directing, guiding and controlling the policy of the State, infusing into it a large-hearted benevolence, relax-

ing the rigour of our cast-iron system, accentuating, deepening, and strengthening those forces which make for progress and which, though their career might be temporarily arrested are bound to assert themselves in this world of God's providence for all things tend steadily, though slowly, towards the approximation of that perfection which is the divine ideal (*cheers*). We recognise the dual character of the Viceroy as the representative of the Sovereign, and also as the first minister of the crown. We are fully alive to the peculiarity of the situation. All the same we decline, distinctly decline on your behalf, to associate him with that policy which this resolution condemns. For, as the representative of the sovereign, it will be our duty later on to approach him for the redress of that grievance of which we complain in this resolution. We dissociate him from that policy, we separate the man from the ruler, (*hear, hear*), the statesman from the politician, for we cannot bring ourselves to believe that a ruler so sympathetic in his utterances, so generous, so large-hearted in his views, so keenly appreciative of the situation, will countenance a policy opposed to the best traditions of British rule, repugnant to all that is highest, noblest and truest in British statesmanship. For the echoes of his great speech are still ringing in our ears, that speech which he delivered to an assembly of the Taluqdars of Oudh. Read that speech, contrast that speech with the policy. The speech, how noble, how generous, how sympathetic; the policy, how narrow, how illiberal, how unEnglish (*hear, hear*). English veracity, said the Viceroy, in language which I hope will be written upon the portals of Government House, upon the entrance to the Council Chambers, (*hear, hear*), has done more to establish and preserve this Oriental Empire than English valour and discipline (*cheers*). Never were truer things said in more felicitous languages and if English veracity has won this great Empire for India, might we not look confidently forward for a practical illustration of that principle in the

policy of the Viceroy (*cheers*)? Might we not hope for a reconciliation between principle and policy, and between word and action? Might we not confidently look forward to that highest form of veracity which is the crowning glory of statesmanship, which has built, which has consolidated and which has extended this vast fabric of Imperial sway? Sir, if you will permit me for one moment as I am on this subject of the Viceroy, I will refer to a local application of that speech which seems to have a significant bearing upon the demonstration which seems to have taken place in this city. The Viceroy dealt with special emphasis, in that speech addressed to the Taluqdars of Oudh, upon the lesson, the great lesson of reconciliation, between those who, on the occasion of the Mutiny, fought on behalf of the British Government and those who took another part. Now, Sir, in this historic city, in this home of reconciliation, our hosts—for I conceive that we are the guests of the whole city, that Lucknow is treating to great act of hospitality, that is Hindus Mahomedans and even officials, Congress-men and anti-congressmen, we are all the guests of them, (*cheers*)—our hosts have raised a discordant note. They have ventured to record a protest against this movement. I am anxious and willing to speak of them in terms of the utmost possible respect. I am prepared to extend to them the courtesy and consideration which they have denied to us. But I will say this—that it is rather late in the day to record a protest against the movement which has now been fifteen years in existence (*cheers*), to which official recognition has been extended and whose undying achievements are written in characters of gold in the enduring pages of modern Indian History (*cheers*). There never was a more striking personality among the Mohomedans of this generation than the late Sir Syed Ahmed. Of Sir Syed Ahmed I desire to speak in terms of the greatest admiration and praise. We worship in opposite temples, we belong to opposing political systems whatever our differences might have been. they lie entombed in that grave where

remain the illustrious dead (*cheers*). Sir Syed Ahmed founded a Patriotic Association with a view to oppose the Congress movement. He was supported by official and retired Anglo-Indian gentlemen. He had his supporters in England. Despite all his influence, all the official backing and all the weight of his striking personality, what has become of the Patriotic Association? (*laughter*) The ways of all things of evil is all sham, all show, all impositions, all possibilities of achievements; their counterparts in the eternal verity of things are bound to disappear in this world of God's providence (*cheers*). That is written in the book of time with the pencil of the Almighty. One observation I wish to make with reference to the statement which was published authoritatively by the Raja of Mahmoodabad. He is a personal friend of mine. I have the honour of his acquaintance. I have not used the past tense because I hope he will consider me still a friend. He said that the Congress propaganda was a propaganda calculated to spread disaffection among our people (*laughter*). Well Sir, if that was the case, we should have been taken under the merciful protection of the Government long ago, specially after the revision of the sedition law (*cheers*). I wish to tell the Taluqdars of Oudh and all whom it may concern, I wish to remind them of what Sir Antony MacDonnell said (*cheers*) with reference to this movement in 1890. He was then Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces. He was approached by the Chairman of our Reception Committee, and the words of Sir Antony MacDonnell were repeated by the Chairman of the Reception Committee in his speech. Sir Antony MacDonnell said, "I will not think worse or better of anybody for having attended the Congress". Sir, who are the men who are bitterly disloyal,—the men, who say ditto to every measure of Government, who in season and out of season sing the praise of Government, who suffer and suffer in silence of bitterness of unknown and unknowable sorrow, or those

who, like myself, give expression, frank expression, to our grievances, raise the danger signal and call the attention of Government and press for remedy? Sir, in these days I am perfectly sure the greatest bulwark of all the Governments, be they indogenous or be they foreign, is the contentment, the gratitude and the affection of the people (*cheers*). How is the affection of the people to be won except by the removal of grievances, and how are the people to remove their grievances except by the adoption of constitutional means or the adoption of revolutionary measures. We are the friends of Reform because we are enemies of Revolution (*cheers*). We have made our choice, let our enemies make theirs (*laughter and cheers*). Do they wish to belong to our camp, or do they wish to belong to the camp of revolutions (*hear, hear*). There is no intermediary step between Reform and Revolution (*cheers*). For you must enlist yourselves under the banner of Reform or you must take your place behind the standard of Revolt and Revolution (*cheers*). I am certain of this that if the Congress existed in the early fifties there would have been no mutiny. I am certain of this for the educated India with all their influence and with all their knowledge would have enlightened the Government, and would have instructed and warned their countrymen and thus they would have averted the greatest danger of this century. Sir, I am afraid I must beg your pardon for making a digression (*cries of "go on," "go on"*). It is unavoidable. The Resolution condemns only the system. The Resolution condemns the Municipal Bill of Calcutta and also the Bombay Municipal Bill as being opposed to the principle of local self-government. Sir, local self-government is the gift of our rulers, but it is in entire accord with those deep-seated instincts which are fostered by the Panchayet system and by our village communities. These village communities, as you, Sir, reminded us the other day in your presidential speech, carry the mind back to the dawn of human civilization when the ancestors of the self-



governing nations of the earth at the present moment were roaming in the primitive forests in a state of primitive simplicity. The antiquity of this institution cannot be called in question. To them was accorded a measure of self-government which the British Government has not thought fit to confer upon the Municipalities of British India. They not only looked after the sanitations and conservancy of the villages concerned, but they administered justice and controlled the police. Therefore those village communities were complete self-governing unities. My point is this—that we enjoyed in ancient India a much larger measure of Self-Government than the British Government has given to us, and even what was given to us is to be taken away from us (*shame*). In 1881 the boon of Local Self-government was conferred upon the Municipal towns of India under the great resolution of Lord Ripon. (*Cheers*). In 1876 the Corporation of Calcutta was re-constituted upon a popular basis. It is a remarkable fact, expressive of the irony of fate and the changes of opinion which are constantly taking place, that the great resolution of Lord Ripon appeared over the signature of Mr. Alexander Mackenzie, who as Sir Alexander Mackenzie was the author, originator, framer and inspirer of the Calcutta Municipal Bill which has destroyed civic rights of my native town (*Shame*). I think it is a matter for unutterable shame. Sir Alexander Mackenzie is a name well-known to my friends of the Central Provinces. He is the author of the enhancement which they so bitterly complain of. He is a man of universal fame (*laughter*), well-known in Bengal, well-known in the Central Provinces. His fame spread even to the other side of the waters. He is well-known in Burma. Now he has retired. I am bound to say that the blessings of the community do not follow him or afford him any consolation in the days of his retirement (*laughter*). It is equally remarkable that it was a Conservative Viceroy and a Conservative Secretary of State who conferred the boon of local self-government upon the people of Calcutta. It is

a Conservative Viceroy and a Conservative Secretary of State who withdraw that right. These are changes to which even the best and the noblest of men are exposed. Therefore, Sir, it comes to this—that we in Calcutta have been in possession of the boon of local self-government for nearly a quarter of a century. Why should it be now withdrawn from us? Sir Douglas Straight, who is now the Editor of the Pall Mall Gazette, said that a concession once made should never be withdrawn except under the stress of paramount necessity. Whether such a necessity exists in this case is the question. But on the very threshold of the enquiry, I am confronted with a difficulty, for we have it, on the authority of no less distinguished a personage than Sir John Woodburn, that the Calcutta Municipal Bill is a perfectly innocuous measure and that all it does is a re-adjustment and not extinction of the principle of local self-government. Well, Sir, if that is so, I have no grievance. I am prepared for re-adjustment provided that in the process of re-adjustment the whole thing does not disappear (*laughter*). Is that re-adjustment or extinction? Let us examine the matter a little closely. What is local self-government such as the ordinary folks who do not breath the pure atmosphere of officialism in the heights of Olympus, conceive? What is local self-government? Local self-government is the administration of local affairs by the representatives of the local public. If all authority, all power, all patronage is withdrawn from the local representatives, and is vested in the representatives of official hierarchy and European merchants, I conceive local self-government is at an end. Is that the real state of things? What is the present constitution of Calcutta? What was the old constitution of Calcutta? Let us for a moment examine the matter. Under the old constitution the Corporation of Calcutta consisted of 75 members, two-third of whom were elected—mark two-third were elected. Under the new constitution, which is said to be a re-adjustment and not an extinction, not two-third but

only half of the members are to be elected, and then there is to be an official Chairman who will have a vote and a casting vote in case of equality of votes. Therefore, Sir, we are driven to this position. There will be 26 members, official members, against 5 popular members, under the best of circumstances and conditions. In any case, the popular representatives will be in a minority. They may be in a hopeless minority, because at the ward elections some members might be returned who are officials. Therefore, I am right in the contention that the effect of this transformation is transferring the entire authority from the hands of the representatives of rate-payers into the hands of officials of Government and their friends. Is that local self-government? (*cries of "no" "no"*). Of course not. But the Government stands convicted out of its own mouth. Mr. Baker, the Municipal Secretary who was in charge of the Bill in the Bengal Legislative Council, not once, not twice, not thrice, but repeatedly, as often as he opened his mouth, said that the main object of the Bill was to cut down the preponderance of Hindus in the Corporation. What have the poor Hindus done to merit this treatment at the hands of the Government? Is this the reward for the devotion and faithful allegiance to the principle of local self-government in the capital of the Indian Empire? But the very proposal involves the extinction of local self-government, for the Hindus constitute the bulk of the population. They own the bulk of the assessable property in Calcutta and they pay the bulk of the taxes to the Municipal funds. Therefore, in accordance with the elementary principle of local self-government, they ought to have a preponderant voice in the deliberations of the Corporation (*cheers*). For John Stuart Mill, as the greatest exponent of representative institutions whom this century witnessed, has laid down this principle,—‘that local representation is to be proportionate to the payment of local taxes’; and therefore the Hindus are entitled to a preponderant majority in the Corporation. But, Sir, we are made to

the Uitlanders in the city of our birth. The English people at the present moment are waging a war for the purpose of securing to the Uitlanders of South Africa the inestimable boon of political franchise. We citizens of Calcutta, had enjoyed that franchise for a period of 25 years and now the British Government, with strange inconsistency, is about to deprive us of that franchise (*shame*) for which they are fighting at the point of the sword in South Africa. The Englishman newspaper, a great friend of the people of this country (*laughter*), said the other day in speaking of the Congress that it was like a band of Africanders in South Africa, with this difference, that it is less mischievous than the band of Africanders. We distinctly decline to be compared to the Africanders. We are the loyal subjects of the Crown (*hear, hear*), wedded, inexorably wedded, to the British connection, which is a pledge and guarantee of the attainment of justice and political freedom (*cheers*). We are no Africanders but we are Uitlanders, and there is no Secretary of State of the type of Joseph Chamberlain to enforce our claims. That is the true state of things. Now, Sir, let me ask what is the justification for this change of the law. Were the Commissioners tried and found wanting? Was it ever alleged that the Municipal administration of Calcutta had failed? If that was so, the position would be unassailable, but absolutely there is no evidence of failure. On the contrary, then, whatever evidence there is, it points to a distinctly opposite conclusion. Compare Calcutta when it was under the direct administration of Government with what it now is after quarter of a century of administration by elected Commissioners. My opinion is of no consequence, I am under trial. I am a member—I was a member of the Corporation, but I resigned my seat—I am under trial, and my opinion is of no consequence. Let me place before you the opinion of an individual who attained the highest official position in these provinces, and who might be supposed to be rather partial than otherwise to the Government. Mr. afterwards Sir John Strachey

made a report on the sanitary condition of Calcutta when it was under the administration of Government. And what did he say? It was one of the filtheist cities in Asia, a scandal and disgrace to civilised administration. That was the opinion of Sir John Strachey when Calcutta was not under direct administration of the Commissioners. Now let me quote another authority on my side. Sir Henry Fowler, speaking from his place in the House of Commons on the occasion of a recent debate, said he had failed to discover any evidence of failure on the part of the elected Commissioners in the charge of their duties (*hear, hear*). Therefore, Sir, I am entitled to hold that the Corporation of Calcutta, the greatest self-governing institution in the Indian Empire, has been superseded without a shadow or semblance of any justification (*shame*); and if the Government thought that it had 'a strong case, why did not put it to the test of scrutiny by the appointment of a commission of enquiry? (*hear, hear*). The greatest criminal with his hands wreaking with the blood of his murdered victim, is allowed a trial before a constituted tribunal of the land, but the most illustrious self-governing institution in the Indian Empire, with a brilliant record of past achievements is to be condemned without even a show or semblance of inquiry (*shame*). Does that commend itself to your sense of justice? There was ample time for a commission of inquiry, for the application—I am afraid I am taking up too much of your time (*cries of "go on", "go on"*)—to the Government for the introduction of the Calcutta Municipal Bill was made in June 1897 and the Bill itself was introduced in March 1898. There was ample time. We prayed again and again but prayed in vain. The Government treated our prayer with stolid indifference. The same prayer was repeated from the floor of the House of Commons by Mr. Herbert Robert. (*hear, hear*), to whom we cannot be sufficiently grateful for his endeavours in this connection (*cheers*); and then a reply was given which, I think, affords an apt illus-

tration of the saying, that language was given rather to conceal than express one's thoughts in. What was the reply that Lord George Hamilton gave? I wish, Sir (Mr. President), you were a member of the House on that occasion. I wish Dadabhai Nowroji were there (three cheers for Dadabhai Nowroji were given) to point out the utter hollowness and insincerity of that reply. The reply was this. It is no use instituting an inquiry into the Municipal administration of Calcutta; such a thing is being done by the select committee of the Bengal Legislative Council, and that it would be highly improper on the part of the House of Commons to take the matter out of the hands of a self-governing body like the Bengal Legislative Council. The only drawback about that statement is, that it is misleading and inaccurate from beginning to end (*laughter*). In the first place, no inquiry was made by the Select Committee into the Municipal Administration of Calcutta. I was a member of that Select Committee (*laughter*) and therefore I know perfectly well what we were about. But the rules of the council, the principle having been affirmed, all that the Select Committee had to do was to consider details. It was beyond the legal competence of the Select Committee to enter into the broader question of efficiency or otherwise of the Municipal administration of Calcutta; and I may say that Mr. Norendra nath Sen and myself were the dissenting members on the Calcutta Municipal Bill and strongly protested against this observation of Lord George Hamilton. We have received no reply to that part of our statement. I wish to draw the attention of the Congress to the other part of the statement that the Bengal Legislative Council is a self-governing body. Against this statement I have the advantage of getting officials to fight with officials, and I am saved the trouble of saying one word or other. I am an impartial, unbiassed spectator to the affray that goes on between officials. In this connection we have again the statement of Mr. Baker, the Municipal Secretary in charge of the Bill. He said

from his place in the Bengal Legislative Council that the Council was a subordinate legislature (my friend will bear me out), and that it was a part of the duty of that Council to register the mandates of the Supreme Government (*shame*). What becomes of this glorious fabric of a self-governing body, inquiry into the Municipal administration of Calcutta? Well Sir, therefore, there was no enquiry at all, and we have been condemned unheard. We have a grievance. Our civic rights have been taken away from us. The other part of the resolution has reference to Bombay. I will not dwell on that part of the resolution, but I cannot help contrasting our fate with the fate of the people of the North-Western Provinces under the beneficent administration of the Sir Antony MacDonnell (*cheers*). Here, instead of curtailment, there is to be an enlargement, so far as I have been able to understand the principle of local self-government, in the greater powers which it is proposed to confer upon the District Boards. Mark the difference which is shown to public opinion by Sir Antony MacDonnell in the matter of the Land Bill and contrast it with the contemptuous treatment which public opinion received in Bengal to the hands of the local authorities; and yet, Sir, if there is any measure more than another which needs the support of public opinion it is the Municipal measures. Municipal measures deal with the question of sanitation, and sanitary measures can never be carried out except with the aid of the public opinion unequivocally condemned the Bill. Lord Ripon said in one of his speeches as Chancellor of the University that public opinion in India is destined soon to become the irresistible, unresisted master of the Government. Lord Curzon, in that admirable speech which he delivered to the Taluqdars of Oudh, expressed himself in similar language. He said: "Indeed, to me, it seems that the times have passed by when the rulers can any way live with impunity amidst the clouds of Olympus. They must descend from hill-tops and visit the haunts of men. They must speak to the people in their own tongue, must be

one in purpose and heart with the people. Only then will they justify their high station. Only then will their authority be free from challenge, because it will be founded upon trust." The rulers and the ruled must be one in purpose and one in heart. I ask is there solidarity of opinion and sentiment between the rulers and the ruled? Have we not again and again prayed for the release of the Natu Brothers? And it was not until the other day that the Natu Brothers were released. Have we not again and again prayed for the withdrawal of the Calcutta Municipal Bill? And the Calcutta Municipal Bill has been passed into law (*shame*). I am afraid there is no renewal of confidence, no interchange of opinion between the rulers and the ruled. I am afraid both the rulers and the ruled stand isolated and apart in grim and solemn silence. The gulf is widening. That which ought to be regarded as the proudest memorial of British rule is considered to be a grievance; that educated natives of India should claim equality in political rights with Englishmen can only be due to the education which the English have been instrumental in introducing into our midst, which constitutes the noblest achievements of British rule in India (*cheers*). Our rulers seem to think differently. There is reaction in their policy, reaction in opinion, reaction along the entire line, reaction is the order of the day. But those great and illustrious men who founded the Anglo-Indian Empire, who preserved and consolidated it, were animated by different motives.

Miss Garland, in that admirable speech to which we all listened with so much interest and with no little admiration, quoted an extract from the speech—the memorable speech—of Lord Macaulay, delivered 60 years ago in the House of Commons, when with a gift of prophetic inspiration, he anticipated the advent of that day when the Indian subjects of the Crown, educated in Western learning, would crave for Western institutions; and Macaulay went on to say that that would be the proudest day in the annals of England



(*cheers*). Our rulers at the present moment seem to take a different view of the situation. They would fain undo the past. They would fain roll back the tide of progress which has set in with such irresistible force. Shall we let them, shall we permit them to prove false to the noblest traditions of their own race? (*cries of "No," "No"*). No, *servius Romanus sum* was the boast of the ancient world. Our boast is a greater one. We are British subjects. We are part and parcel of the greatest empire that the world has ever seen, an empire over which the sun never sets. May the glories of that empire in the domain of human freedom and justice never fade! We are the subjects of this great empire, over which floats the high flag of freedom. We are the subjects of an empire where a bondsman can never breathe, and where the moment he sets his foot his chains burst around him and he stands forth a regenerated and emancipated being (*cheers*). Citizens of this great empire, an empire whose watchword is freedom, which has emancipated the Negro slaves, which has taught great lessons of constitutional liberty to the rest of the world-citizens of this great empire, ought we to submit to our rights being filched away from us? Ought we to submit to our being reduced to the rank of hewers of wood and drawers of water in our own country (*No, No*)? Ought we permit the brand of the helot to be placed upon us and leave an ignoble bruise? (*No, No*)? Standing in this historic city within a measurable distance of that place which was the scene of the trials and sufferings, the ultimate triumph of the greatest hero of the Hindu legend and of his greater consort, let us resolve in our heart of hearts and do what lies in our power to check this current of reactionary policy, to win back our lost position, to continue our glorious and patriotic work until it culminates in the attainment by us in full measure (*cheers*) of the inestimable blessings of British freedom and British justice. I am certain of this; that in this holy endeavour we shall claim and we shall receive in full measure the active co-operation of

our own countrymen, and even of our political opponents. We shall receive the sympathies of civilised humanity, and above all the blessings of Almighty Providence (*hear, hear*). I have an undying faith in the justice of our cause, a burning conviction that, though darkness may cloud our prospects, the day of deliverance and enfranchisement is near at hand (*cheers*). We may meet with a temporary reverse, a temporary check. The flag which we hold aloft, the banner of the Congress, might drop from our sinking hands, but others will rise up who will take up that flag and lead us to triumphant victory (*hear, hear and cheers*). I am sure patience is what is needed—not the patience of despair and despondency—but patience which is born of faith consecrated by the living genius of self-sacrifice. What are 30 years, or even half a century in the lifetime of nations or communities? Read the histories of the great European living nations, mark the patience, the marvellous patience, fortitude, indomitable resolve to serve their country, to promote her honour, her glory, her truest interest. Remember that we are confronted with one of the gravest crises in our history. If we succumb to that crisis, the political enfranchisement of our people will be infinitely postponed, but if we rise above it, we shall have done a service to India, to England and to humanity, and shall have covered ourselves with undying renown. Act bravely before man and God, so that when you are dead and gone, and when you are beyond reproach or praise, it may be said of you that you were tried in the balance and not found wanting, that you overcame grave crisis, that you surmounted all difficulties and that you planted the empire deep in the affections, love and gratitude of the people by securing to them the inestimable blessings of British rule, sanctified by the principles of constitutional justice and freedom, and then you will have done your duty to the country and to the Congress (*loud and continued cheers*).

## LUCKNOW CONGRESS.

## APPOINTMENT OF AN ENGLISH AGENCY.

Hon'ble Babu Surendra Nath Banerjea in moving the resolution—"That an Agency be appointed in England for the purpose of organising, in concert with the British Committee of the Congress, public meetings for the dissemination of information on Indian Subjects and that funds be raised for that purpose,"—said :—I have the honour to move the Resolution which has just been read out by the President. I will not read it again. It is unnecessary to do so ; but, Sir, before I proceed with the Resolution it is necessary to clear my ground to make a few observations with a view to guard against any misconception which the circumstances of the case might suggest. It is not for one moment to be supposed that we desire to suppress or in any way interfere with or encroach upon the functions of the British Committee of the National Congress (*hear, hear*). Sir, our feelings towards that Committee and its respected head Sir William Wedderburn (*cheers*) are feelings of respect, gratitude and admiration for the manifold services which they have rendered to us for the last 12 years or more. We are incapable, in Congress assembled, of passing any Resolution which would in any way interfere with those responsible duties that we have entrusted them with. That is not the scope of this Resolution at all Sir, if it were the scope of the Resolution, I, for my part would be no party to it ; and that is not the scope of this Resolution will be further apparent from the fact that our respected President, Mr. Dutt, has undertaken to supervise and control the work of the agency for the coming year (*cheer*). The British Committee of the National Congress will bring questions before the Paliament and assist in the organisation work referred to in this Resolution. This agency will be supplemental to it, will help it, will be a sort of administering angel to the British Committee. Sir, it is a matter of the first importance, the work to which reference

is made in this resolution. It is a matter of the utmost necessity, that we should from year to year, if possible, send deputations to England with a view to address the electors. When I was in England in 1890 with my friend Mr. Mudholkar, we were asked in the different centres which we visited to come back again, and to repeat those deputations from year to year (*cheers*). We were not able to do it. These deputations were given up. In 1897 I addressed some meetings. Mr. A. M. Bosc (*cheers*) addressed some meetings in 1898. What is now proposed is to reduce this work to a system by the appointment of an agency like this and Sir, I cannot exaggerate the importance of this work. You hold these meetings here from year to year. You spend large sums of money, but your voice will be like that of one crying in the wilderness ; unless and until the cry that you utter here is repeated from the platforms of the British meetings, through the columns of British newspapers, and from the floor of the House of Commons (*cheers*). Our agitation here must be supplemented to the agitation in England. It is not enough for us to hold this demonstration once a year. It is necessary, if possible, to send deputations to England every year. Sir, speaking of the British public I will say this, viz., that Indian gentlemen addressing British audiences cannot find more sympathetic listeners to their grievances anywhere in the world (*hear, hear*). I have studied the English character such as that character in all its strength and all its weakness, and I will say that, if an appeal is made to their instinct of justice and freedom such an appeal is bound to meet with the warmest response (*cheers*). The greatest reforms of this century have all been brought about by direct appeals to the British people. What has brought the home rule within the range of practical politics ? I may say the Irish people held meeting in Dublin and elsewhere, but it was not until the agitation was transferred from Ireland to England and Scotland and meetings on the question held all over the towns of the United Kingdom of

England and Scotland that the conscience of England was roused to do that measures of justice towards the Irish people to which they are entitled. We must follow the same methods, and Sir, if we are to follow the same methods money is needed for the purpose. You must come out with your subscriptions. Sir, there is something peculiarly appropriate in my making this appeal for funds. I am a Brahman. By instinct, by tradition, by association, I am a beggar (*laughter*). The hereditary qualities which are in me have been perfected by practice (*laughter*). I have been here upon this platform more than once appealing to you for funds, and now I extend my Brahminical hand in order that you may come forward with money, hard cash, not the plaudits with which you greet my speeches, hard cash in order that we may be able to start this agency at once. How many are you here—two to three thousand? (*a voice of "more"*). The more, the better. Well is it difficult to raise ten or fifteen thousand rupees amongst us just now at the present moment? I made an appeal to a great meeting of the Congress and a sum of Rs. 6000 was subscribed on the spot. Is it to be said now that our enthusiasm is on the wane, that the men of 1899 are not the men of 1889, that instead of our feelings of patriotism being accentuated, being strengthened and deepened, these feelings are on the wane! I hope and trust not. I hope that the early fervour and the early enthusiasm which animated us in the early days of the Congress have not been spent, and that we are animated by that fervour and enthusiasm and that under its impulse—overwhelming impulse—we are capable of making those sacrifices which the interests, the supreme interests of our country, demand (*cheers*). Come forward with your subscriptions. Act like men before God and Man. It is no use recording resolutions. You must reduce speech into action. The charge that you bring against the Government of this country is that it makes promises which it never redeems. The charge that is brought against you is that you talk big, but that your actions are

incommensurate with your profession. Disprove that charge ; prove yourself worthy of this great National movement. There is no royal road to the attainment of political liberty. You must pay the price. Fortunate you are that you are under a Government so benign that a heavy price of blood has not to be paid. Pay therefore the price of money and thank God that this is the only price which you are called upon to pay. If you do not pay that price, then I will say this,—“Dissolve this Congress, go back to your homes” (*cries of “no, no”*). Don’t talk of National movement, be helots that you are, and that you will always be, unless and until you have learnt the noble lesson of self-sacrifice. Come forward with your subscriptions. Let each man subscribe what he can, and when you have set an example in that direction, then and only then you will have established your claim to that political enfranchisement towards which our hopes and aspirations are directed. I have to announce that Mr. Mudolkar has subscribed Rs. 50 (*Cheers*).

## THE TOWN HALL MEETING.

### PRESENTATION OF AN ADDRESS

TO MR. R. C. DUTT, C.I.E.

Babu Surendranath Banerjea said :—

Gentlemen,

I deem it a privilege to be associated with the function of to-day, to be the instrument of conveying to our distinguished countryman the sense of our approbation and our gratitude to him for our services. But in this matter, I am subject to serious disability. I have been a life-long friend of Mr. R. C. Dutt. We went to England together ; together we studied for the Indian Civil Service ; together we passed the Examination ; together, we came out to this country ; together, we entered the Service.—and then we parted com-

pany, he rising to the position of a Commissioner of Division and I being what I am, a humble school-master. (Laughter and Cheers.) Therefore, Sir, whatever I may say, may be set down to the bias of friendship, to the prepossessions of an early attachment. But my close relations with Mr. Dutt have also their advantages. I know him intimately,—I know him in all his strength and in all his weakness,—and I will say this of him—that to know him is to love him and respect him, to be impressed with his striking personality, his resolute and dauntless strength of purpose, his serene wisdom,—all dominated by an unswerving love of country and all that is highest and noblest and best in the traditions of ancient and modern Indian history. (*Cheers*).

Mr. Dutt has been in the service of Government, but the service which he has now entered upon, is higher and nobler than even the most distinguished service to which he belonged—it is the service of his country and of his countrymen. Mr. Dutt has been honoured by the Government. But what higher honour could there be than the approbation and the gratitude of one's own community? What are titles and decorations—what are powers and principalities,—what is even the splendour of a great name, than the love, the gratitude and the admiration of those in whose midst one's lot is cast. These the choicest of earthly blessings, enjoyed by the favoured of the gods, and yours, Sir. May you long live to enjoy them!

Mr. Dutt while in the service of the Government served his people. Freed from the restraints of Government service, he is even more strenuous in his service to the people. Mr. Dutt has demonstrated that service under the Government is compatible with service to the community. It must be so in all well-ordered states where the Government exists for the people and the people are interested in the well-being of the Government. But, Sir, we are fallen upon evil times and evil tongues, and by darkness and danger compassed round. The forces of reaction are abroad. Our rulers would fain

undo the past—they would fain put back the clock of progress. Vain, delusive hope ! They will no more succeed in this endeavour than Canute did when he with his kingly fiat sought to roll back the rush of the on-coming wave.

It has often struck me as expressive of the vitality of our great movement, of the irresistible fascination which it exercises over the minds of the best and the greatest of our men, that they are drawn to it, as if by an overwhelming impulse which they cannot resist and to which they lend themselves with an eager spontaneity. Men who had been distinguished members in the service of the Government. Men who had distinguished themselves in the service of the Government became distinguished members of the Congress. In Bengal Mr. Justice Guru Das Banerjee, in Madras Justice Sir Subramanya Iyer, in Bombay the late Mr. Justice Telang were distinguished members of the Congress before they became distinguished Judges of the High Court. (Mr. W. C. Banerjee—Mr. Justice Budruddin Tyabji. The speaker—yes, I thank you for the addition.) Sir Romesh Chander Mitter was officiating Chief Justice before he became a leader of the Congress, and our distinguished friend was officiating Commissioner before he was elected President of the Congress. We have two distinguished ex-presidents of the Congress, the Hon'ble Mr. Mehta and the Hon'ble Mr. Ananda Charlu on the platform. We can only express the hope that the facts will spare them to us, and that they will not be translated from the Congress platform to the High Court Bench. (*Cheers and Laughter*.) What is the secret—how do you explain it ? Will you, Sir, let me into the secrets of your prison-house and explain to me the fascination which drew you away from your studies in the quiet of your library, from the contemplation of the divine muses to take your part and share in the great national movement ?

The explanation is easy. Any one who runs may read it. The claims of the Congress are so overwhelming—it is such a loyal and legitimate movement—it meets such an



urgent need of the times that, no matter what differences there may exist between individual and individual,—in temperament, in habits of thought and in personal desires and ambitions—all patriotic Indians devoted to the service of their country feel a call, a command from on high to enroll themselves under its banner. Let the Government note the fact and learn the lesson it teaches. In Lucknow there was an illustration of this truth you know they set up an anti-Congress movement there. Well, some of the leaders of that movement watched our proceedings. They came, they were converted to the faith. Those who came to scoff remained to pray; and I will say this, that if the officials of the Government were to attend our meetings and listen to our arguments they too would be converted.

The address refers to the services which you have rendered to the literature of your country, to your researches in the domain of history. Those who by their labours enrich and adorn the literature of their country and make it more serviceable for the varied purpose of a progressive community are the truest benefactors of their race. That high distinction is yours. Long may you enjoy it! Lastly, reference has been made to your labours in connection with the Calcutta Municipal Bill—a matter which comes home to the hearts of the citizens of Calcutta. It was mainly due to your efforts that the great debate which took place in the House of Commons in February last was the great success it was. Sir, we have lost ground in this matter. Our civic rights have been destroyed. We cried for bread and we have got a stone. Are you going to submit to it? Will you consent to be the hewers of wood and the drawers of water in the city of your birth?—I hope not. The Municipal elections will take place on the 14th March. I trust no self-respecting Hindu will consent to stand as a candidate for Municipal election. You are not wanted in the Corporation. The object of the measure is to cut down Hindu preponderance. There is to be an un-Hindu Corporation in a Hindu town. (*Laughter and*

*cheers*). After this what Hindu with a particle of self-respect will consent to be a member of the Corporation under the existing law? Of course there are black sheep amongst us devoid of self-respect. By all means let them stand,—for them the office of Municipal Commissioner has charms which, though they are incomprehensible to us, are repugnant to our notions of honour and honesty. If this demonstration of to-day has any meaning, any significance, if there is any reality about it, if it is not as hollow as the sounding brass or the tinkling cymbal, then citizens of Calcutta, let us resolve, that as soon as this War cloud has disappeared, we shall brace ourselves up for another struggle to re-assert our lost civic rights and to vindicate our claims to the privileges of a self-governing community. (*Loud cheers*).

#### THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE BRADLAUGH HALL AT LAHORE.

9TH NOVEMBER, 1900.

It is a high honour, to which the Reception Committee have summoned me, by inviting me to lay the foundation-stone of the Hall where the Lahore Congress will meet in December next. The erection of a permanent structure for the sittings of the Congress represents a notable and interesting departure. The Congress has now been in existence for more than 14 years. For the last 14 years the sessions of the Congress have been held in temporarily-erected structures which have cost the country at least a lakh of rupees. This lakh of rupees represents a mere waste of money, if you look at it from the purely commercial point of view. The Punjab Reception Committee have resolved to put an end to this waste and raise a permanent structure\* in which the Congress is to be held whenever the Congress meets in the Punjab. The permanence of the Congress is

thus assured so far at least as the Punjab is concerned. The hall will remain for all time to come a memorial of the public spirit and beneficence of the Punjab, and especially of the Reception Committee of the second Lahore Congress. The Punjab has taught an impressive lesson to the rest of India. It has set an example which it would be difficult to follow.

The Hall is to be called the Bradlaugh Hall. I cannot think of a more suitable name than that which links the first permanent structure of the Congress with the name of Charles Bradlaugh, the most illustrious champion of the Congress cause in England. In the muster-roll of those distinguished men, who have served India and her peoples, there is no name which occupies a higher place in our love and esteem and in our affectionate regards than the name of Charles Bradlaugh. His memory is embalmed in our recollections.

It will be transmitted as a consecrated possession—a rich heritage to after-generations—to be to them a source of inspiration in their arduous constitutional struggles for constitutional liberty. Bradlaugh's was a heroic life—full of high-souled devotion. But in all his struggles, whether fighting for India or for the rights of conscience, he was unfaltering in his allegiance to the constitution. He sought to change the law with the means which the law had placed at his disposal. In selecting him as our champion and in honouring his memory as we have honoured it to-day, we declare to the world our firm and unalterable resolve to fight the battles of the country by constitutional means and through their aid alone. We adore the principle of liberty. But it is constitutional liberty, obtained by constitutional methods, that we hanker after.

We all remember the outburst of grief which overwhelmed the Indian community when Charles Bradlaugh died. The news of his death came upon us with all the startling suddenness and oppressive severity of a great domestic calamity.

We mourned his loss. We honoured his memory. We resolved to perpetuate it. What has become of our resolutions? Where are the memorials? The Punjab has saved us from the stigma of an unredeemed national pledge. We are never tired of finding fault with the Government for its broken promises. It would be as well if we sometimes looked nearer home and observed the promises we made. However that may be, remember that Charles Bradlaugh was snatched away from us in the midst of his unfulfilled work, and while yet the programme of his life for the good of India lay unredeemed and unaccomplished. Standing in his consecrated presence and gathered together to do honour to his memory, let us resolve to complete his work, to carry out his programme and so honour his memory in a way that would have been most acceptable to him. If this demonstration has any meaning,—any real significance—if it is not as empty as the sounding brass or the tinkling cymbal, let us raise in his honour a memorial in our hearts, more lasting than brass or marble,—more useful than even this hall,—a memorial which would mean our entire self-dedication, self-consecration to the task for which Bradlaugh laboured so zealously and so assiduously in the latter years of his life, but which alas! he unfulfilled—the task of the good of India and of her peoples.

And now let me in your name and on your behalf invoke the blessings of Almighty Providence on these our high endeavours, (Here the whole audience spontaneously sprung to their feet). May He extend His protecting hand over the structures which we are about to raise and consecrate the great cause which it represents. May this hall be the cradle and the nursery of the public life of the Punjab. May the youth and the manhood of the Punjab learn here the lessons of constitutional liberty, and learning them, seek to strengthen, consolidate and extend them for the benefit of our people. May this hall be the centre and the source of a new inspiration which, radiating forth from this

*historic province, cover the land with its light, its lustre and its effulgence and teach the peoples of India the new situation and the new duty which that situation inspires—the duty of constitutional agitation for the attainment of our constitutional rights.*

## LAHORE CONGRESS, 1900.

### EMPLOYMENT OF INDIANS IN MINOR CIVIL SERVICES.

The Hon'ble Mr. Surendranath Banerjee, who was received with enthusiastic cheering, said :—Mr. President, Brother-Delegates, Ladies and gentlemen, I have the honour to propose “That the Congress regrets the practical exclusion of natives of India from the higher appointments in the Police, the Public Works, the State Railways, the Opium, the Customs, the Telegraph, the Survey and other Departments and prays that full justice be done to the claims of the people of India in regard to their appointments.” I rejoice that the Congress has taken up this question after having achieved if not a victory, something at any rate in the nature of a victory in regard to our agitation for the wider employment of our countrymen in the covenanted appointments. The three important questions which constitute the chief planks in the Congress platform may briefly be summarised as follows :—The wider employment of our people in the Public Service, the introduction of Representative element into the Government of the country and the purification of the system of the administration of justice by the separation of judicial and executive functions. The first of these questions stands on a different footing from the others. The first of these questions to which this resolution refers is to us a heritage consecrated by illustrious names not the least noble of which in Bombay are Dadabhai Naoroji, and Nouroji Fardunji, and in Bengal the late Kristodas Pal

and the late Ram Gopal Ghose (*Hear, hear and cheers*). The policy of the English Rulers in regard to the wider employment of our people in the responsible offices of trust and responsibility, is, I regret to say, very different from the policy of the Roman Conquerors of old or from the policy of the Great Akbar. In the case of Akbar the grandsons of those who had fought against his grandfather became the Captains of his army, the governors of his provinces, the confidential advisers of their sovereign. It was a policy of trust and confidence, a policy which was sanctified by the immediate successors of the great Moghul. I am sorry that in the case of the English Rulers of India it is no longer a policy of trust and confidence but a policy largely leavened by mistrust and suspicion (voices "*shame*"). Our fathers, as soon as their intellects were stimulated and their self-respect enhanced by the education which they received at the hands of Englishmen, commenced an agitation against their exclusion from these high offices. Therefore this question comes to us in the light of a heritage. In carrying on this agitation, we are performing an act of filial piety, rendering obeisance to the adored memories of our sires, for, what memories in Bengal are more loved or respected than those of Kristodas Pal and Ram Gopal Ghose, or what name excites greater reverence in Bombay than that of Dadabhai Naoroji. This claim for the wider employment of our countrymen in the higher offices of state is not only founded upon considerations of justice and expediency, but upon the promises of our beloved sovereign. We take our stand upon the proclamation, the Magna Charta of our rights and liberties. The proclamation, the whole proclamation, and *nothing but the proclamation* (*Hear, hear*)—that is our watchword and battle-cry (*Cheers*). Armed with the proclamation, we are invincible in battle and undaunted in defeat. Taking our stand upon the proclamation we appeal to the rulers of India in the name of our sovereign to redeem its gracious promises. We hold ourselves as the trustees of the honour and the dignity

of our beloved *Empress* (Cheers). And those who defer the fulfilment of the sacred obligations contained in that proclamation do harm to the honour and the reputation of our beloved sovereign (Cheers). That is our attitude ; and Sir, the Queen was pleased to say in that proclamation in one of those passages which have often been quoted, :“ It is our further will that so far may be our subjects of whatever race or creed be freely admitted into all offices the duties of which they are qualified by their education, ability and integrity duly to discharge.” And to add to the solemnity of this gracious promise, Her Majesty invoked the blessing of Almighty Providence :—“ May the God of all power grant to us strength by which we may carry out these, our solemn declarations.” These are the words, the concluding words of that proclamation ; and yet, Sir, I regret to have to say there are people—they shall be nameless, who venture to be little this proclamation. I have read with amazement a discussion which took place not long ago at Simla in connection with this matter. It was said by a distinguished authority that if the Romans had ruled in India, the proclamation would never have been issued. I know not whether it would have been issued or not. It serves no useful purpose to speculate upon potentialities and possibilities.

But this I do know that if the Romans had ruled in India the inestimable boon of Roman citizenship would have been extended to the remotest corners of the Empire (Cheers). Further, I do know this—that if the Roman Emperor had issued a proclamation, no Roman pro-consul would have dared to set it at defiance (Hear, hear and cheers) but I ask the question, “ Is that proclamation to be regarded as merely a ceremonial document or as having a binding force upon the consciences and the policy of our rulers ?” In this connection we have the highest authority in support of the view which must be gratifying to every patriotic Indian, that the proclamation is obligatory upon the rulers of India and that as we consider it to be our great charter, the English Civil

Service must regard it also as the table of their commandments. In this view I can do nothing better than quote to you the observation of Lord Lansdowne belonging to the party which is now in power. Speaking from his place in the Viceregal Council in 1893 he said. "The Proclamation I regard as being absolutely obligatory upon the Government of India" (Hear, hear). Lord Ripon, as you know perfectly well, went a step further. He said ;—" It is not a ceremonial document, it is not a diplomatic instrument. If it is obligatory at all, it is obligatory upon those in respect of whom it is addressed." Sir, the other day at a banquet which was given to the Governor-Elect of Madras, Lord James Hereford, a name well-known to the legal world in England, called the attention of the Governor-Elect to the terms of the proclamation and said "it was the Magna Charta of the people of India in the highest sense. It was also the table of commandments of the Indian Civil Service." Therefore, it comes to this that the terms of the proclamation are obligatory upon the rulers of the land. Have they been fulfilled? I do not wish to say one word which would militate against the honour of my sovereign or the reputation of the British Government in India. But the fact remains that the highest Indian authorities have, from time to time, declared that the terms of the proclamation remain inadequately redeemed. Lord Lytton, speaking as the Chancellor of the University of Calcutta, said that her Gracious Majesty's proclamation had not been fulfilled and in a document, a confidential letter which he addressed to the Secretary of State, letter no longer confidential, he used much stronger language. He said that the people of India had been cheated out of their dues and the Government had broken to the hope the words of promise which they had uttered to the ear. We are therefore justified in holding that the terms of the proclamation have not been carried out. But if some thing like an honest effort has been made to secure the wider employment of our people in the ranks of the Convenanted Civil Service,



little or nothing has been done so far as their employment in the higher offices of what are called the minor civil services is concerned. These minor civil services include the Postal department, the Telegraph department, the Police department, the Survey and Customs department, the State and other Railway departments. If you look at the statistics connected with these Departments you will find that the higher offices, the bulk of the higher offices—I should not be guilty of the smallest exaggeration if I say that at least 80 per-cent of the higher offices—are filled by Europeans and Anglo-Indians (A voice "Anglo-Indian Imperialists"), Imperialists, somebody says. They may be imperialists or not, but, at any rate, these departments constitute the close preserve, the absolute monopoly of these gentlemen. We are excluded. And why? Because of our race. Our colour is our disqualification. (Loud cheers). And the terms of the proclamation, which lays down that merit is to be the sole test of qualification, are ignored. Let me give you some facts and figures in order to bring home to your minds the gross injustice done to our countrymen in the matter of their employment in these high offices. I will take in the first instance the figures for the Forest department. Do not be alarmed. I am not going to read all this (referring to a bundle of papers he had in hand). My figures refer to Bengal and what is true of Bengal is more or less true of other provinces. Bear in mind that in Bengal we are a race of talkers, we have carried agitation to the point of perfection (Cheers). We have got our press, which is powerful, we have our various associations, and if anywhere Government is prone to defer to public opinion it is in Bengal. Therefore if this state of things is a scandal in Bengal, it must be a graver scandal all over the other provinces. Here are the facts. In the Forest department there are 24 high appointments in the Bengal Establishment. How many do you think of these appointments are held by Europeans, how many by Indians? Make a guess, you will never be able to

come near the mark, (a voice, "zero.") Only two are held by Indians and twenty-two are held by Anglo-Indians. And the Public Service Commission made a recommendation to the effect that the Government of India should keep in view the policy of training in India men qualified to take charge of the higher administrative appointments so as to avoid, as far as possible, the necessity for expanding the Imperial Branch of the Service. This was said in 1887. We are in the year of grace 1900. 13 years have elapsed and little or nothing has been done so far as this recommendation of the commission is concerned.

Now, Sir, let us take the Opium Department. This is a department out of which you know Government derives a handsome revenue. There are 77 appointments in the higher grades of the Opium Department. Of these 77, only 8 are held by Indians. But the Public Service Commission recommended that the future recruitment of the department should be subject to the general principle of equality of treatment of all classes of Her Majesty's Indian subjects. Magnificent equality! (Laughter). Eight out of seventy seven appointments are held by native Indians.

Take again the Customs Department. There are 33 superior appointments in this Department. How many of these appointments do you think are held by natives of India? Of the 33, 31 are filled by Europeans and two by natives, and yet Sir Charles Trevelyan when he was Finance-Minister observed that the whole of the appointments of the Customs Department might be filled by Indians. Then there is the Preventive Branch of the Customs Department. There are 157 appointments in it. How many do you think are held by Indians? I now turn to my friend who made that guess on the last occasion. How many, Sir, do you think of these appointments are held by Indians? You will be right if you say zero (voices "shame"). It is an unutterable shame; it is a disgrace of the most scandalous

kind that these 157 appointments should all be held by persons who are not Indians. Then we have got 100 apprentices in this branch. How many do you think of these are natives of India? Will you guess again, Sir? A Eurasian gentleman whose mother was a European and whose father was a Mahomedan holds one of these appointments. It is most interesting statistics.

Take again the Survey Department. How many of the higher appointments do you think are held by Indians in this department? I will turn to my friend again. All by Europeans, and none by Indians. Cipher is the order of the day here (Hear, hear, voices "shame"). Sir, in this connection, with your permission, I desire to read a statement which was made by the Head of the Survey Department, and which was laid before the Public Service Commission. It was a statement drawn up by Colonel Du Pré. Look at the attitude of this Head of the Survey Department in regard to the admission of Indians into his Department. This is what he says :—"I may here remark, that my numerous inspections show me that the tendency of the European surveyors is to stand and look while the natives are made to do the drawing and hand-printing as if they thought themselves above it. This is a mistake and cannot be permitted for the future. Besides it is suicidal for the European to admit that natives can do any one thing better than themselves and they should of course claim to be superior in everything and only allow natives to perform subordinate duties. In my own old parties I never permitted a native to touch a theodolite or to do computation on the principle of the triangulation or scientific system. All this work must be done by Europeans". If that be the attitude of the Head of the Department, it is no wonder that there is not a single native gentleman filling any high appointment in that Department.

Take the Jail Department. Who are the inmates of Her Majesty's prisons? I suppose most of them are our country-

men. Some of us have some experience of Jail life (Laughter.) My distinguished friend (pointing to Mr. Tilak) has more recent experience of it (cries of "shame"). My experience is somewhat antiquated. It dates so far back as the year 1883. Be that as it may, the bulk of prisoners in our Jails are Indians, be they respectable or otherwise ; and yet the Jailors of the more important Jails and the Superintendents of Jails are all Europeans, absolutely unacquainted with the feelings and prejudices of the inmates of the Jails. Of course an anomaly of this kind was bound to make an impression upon the minds of members of the Public Service Commission and they accordingly made the recommendation that in future when Superintendents of Jails (Central and District) were not Medical Officers, more opportunity might be given to natives of India to show their fitness for these appointments. How has this recommendation been attended to ? Not a single native of India is Superintendent of any Jail in Bengal (cries of "shame"). I do not know what the state of things is in the Punjab (a voice, none). Well, it is much the same in the Punjab. I should have expected it. I suppose it is the same everywhere else.

Next take the Telegraph Department. There are 29 superior appointments in the Telegraph Department. With 4 exceptions, all these are held by Europeans.

I will deal lastly with the Police. In the Bengal Police out of 102 superior appointments, only 5 are held by natives of India, and I believe there is only one Indian District Superintendent of Police ; and in the Calcutta Police out of 10 superior appointments, only one, that of Detective Superintendent,—is held by a native of India. The Public Service Commission in this connection remarked 'that "endeavours should be made to introduce a reasonable proportion of natives of India, regard being had to the efficiency of the service." Reasonable proportion means 5 in a 100 (Laughter). And, Sir, in this connection, I cannot but advert with a sense of the deepest indignation

to our exclusion from the competitive examination which is held in London for recruitment to the office of Assistant Superintendent of Police, on the ground of our race (cries of "shame"). We are permitted to compete at the open competitive examination for the Civil Service of India. We are permitted to compete at the examination in connection with Coopers Hill ; we are permitted to compete at the examination in connection with the Telegraph and Forest Departments. But from this particular examination, natives of India are excluded because they are natives of India. Just as I was about to speak to this resolution, a very important piece of information bearing on this point was given to me by my distinguished friend, Sirdar Mansingh. The representative of a distinguished family, inheriting the martial instincts of his race, he wanted to compete at this examination to qualify himself as Assistant Superintendent of Police in the Punjab. And what was the answer that was vouchsafed to his request? Natives of India are debarred from appearing at this examination (cries of "shame"). I think, Sir, it is a matter of unutterable shame. There ought to go forth from this Congress the strongest protest against an exclusion based upon considerations which impose an indignity on our race. And are we an inferior race—we who have taught the nations of the earth a code of ethics and a system of morality which to this day excites the admiration of mankind. (Prolonged cheers and loud applause). I hope and trust that we shall continue this agitation. We have allowed ourselves to sleep over this matter and the Government is only too ready to sleep when you allow them. Let us resolve in our heart of hearts that this agitation for the wider employment of our countrymen in the higher appointments in connection with the minor Civil Services will be continued with all the enthusiasm, the earnestness, and the patriotic fervour of which this Congress is capable. Let us make it one of the principal plank in the congress platform. Let it go forth that we are not content with our exclusion from these appointments.

The victory will assuredly be ours. The history of constitutional agitation in India is full of inspiration and encouragement. We pressed for the repeal of the Vernacular Press Act and the Vernacular Press Act was repealed. We pressed for the reform of the Councils and the Councils have been reformed. Let us go on in this glorious work. It is a noble work ; it is a sanctified duty, and the God of all nations will vouchsafe to us in his infinite mercy that triumph to which we are entitled. Is there any power on earth which can resist the onset of patriotic fervour ? (Hear, hear). When our hearts are aglow with that divine enthusiasm which words cannot express, we are more powerful than even the most omnipotent Government in the world. The moral laws of governing the universe, under the guidance of an invisible hand, shape the destinies of nations and communities. None can ignore them. None can defy them. Relying on the supremacy of the moral laws and the righteousness of our cause, let us appeal to the Government for justice and justice will not be withheld. And when this great boon will have been conferred upon us we shall have done a great service to the country—we shall have vindicated the honour of the Government, we shall have broadened the self-respect of our community, added to the wealth of civic virtues which constitute the crowning heritage of all nations, be they ancient or be they modern. Let us then launch upon this holy crusade, this great and noble work, and I am sure that under the providence of God, the victory will be ours. (Loud and continuous cheers).

## THIRD DAY.

## THE CONGRESS AND LORD CURZON.

THANKS TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY.

The Hon'ble Mr. Surendranath Banerjea, who on rising was received with enthusiastic cheers, said :—Mr. President, Brother-delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,—The resolution which I have the honour to move runs in these terms :—

“That this Congress desires to record its gratitude to H. E. the Viceroy for the benevolence of his famine policy and for his firm resolve to uphold the interests of order and justice as evidenced in the Regulation recently issued regarding the grant of shooting passes to soldiers and his proceedings in connection with the Rangoon and O'Gara cases.”

Sir,—When Lord Curzon landed in Bombay amid the acclamations of a united people, we, in Congress assembled, accorded him a cordial greeting, and a gracious reply was vouchsafed to our message. Since then two years have elapsed. Two years form less than half the period of Viceregal rule. Two years are insufficient to allow any one to form even a tolerable forecast of the developments of Viceregal policy. Two years are absolutely inadequate for the purposes of the historic judgment. Even in the case of a Viceroy who has completed his full term of office, who has developed his policy and has inscribed his name for good or for evil upon the pages of Indian history, it would be difficult to form an accurate estimate of the man and of his measures, immediately after he has vacated his high and exalted office. In the case of Lord Curzon the difficulties of the situation, the complexities of the problem are aggravated by personal considerations. We are charmed by his brilliant personality, we are fascinated by his striking genius and over-awed by his august position. The splendours of royalty surround him and pervert the judgment. But, Sir, we attempt no

comprehensive view of the Viceregal policy or of the career of Lord Curzon. Our ambition is limited,—we confine ourselves to a particular part of his policy and to the considerations that arise in connection with that part alone. We do not propose to traverse beyond the limits which we have so precisely laid down for ourselves, except with the view of correcting our judgment in regard to it. And, Sir, here I must guard myself against a misconception which the situation affords. By recording this resolution, it is not for one moment to be understood that we the members of this Congress pledge ourselves to an unqualified approval of His Excellency's policy or of his measures. If that were the scope of this resolution, if it were capable of such an interpretation as that, I, for my part, would have no part or share in it, (Hear, hear) for there are features in his administration—there are features in his Government, to which I have the strongest objection to take. His Lordship's policy in connection with Local Self-Government, his policy in connection with the question of education, and speaking for myself, I will also say, his policy in regard to the transfer of agricultural holdings in the Punjab do not commend themselves to my approving judgment (Hear, hear).

Sir, in Bengal, the Calcutta Municipal Act is now the law of the land ; it has received the assent of His Excellency ; it has sounded the death-knell of a Local Self-Government in the capital of the Indian Empire ("shame") and has deprived the citizens of Calcutta of an instrument of popular and political education which was calculated to imbue them with the highest civic virtues. Here in the Punjab—and I must dissociate the Congress from the observations which I am about to make—the Land Alienation Act has been passed, despite the opposition of the enlightened sections of the community, despite the remonstrances of the Head of the Government despite the protest of the representative of the educated community of the Punjab in the Supreme Legislative Council (Cheers). A scion of a princely house, most devoted to the Government,



most anxious to support the Government and the measures of Government, most averse to court those arts which conduce to popularity, Kunwar Sir Harnam Singh felt himself constrained under a sense of over-whelming duty to voice the popular cry and protest against this measure in the Supreme Legislative Council. And, Sir, I must say, that it is difficult to conceive of a more extraordinary piece of legislation than this. Who has ever heard of a law, some of whose provisions are retrospective in their character? Who has heard of a law which places the whole of the legal profession under a ban? I thought, Sir, that we were living under the reign of law, and it has the proud privilege of the British Government to have substituted the reign of law for the reign of discretion. But I have been dis-illusioned. By a swing of the pendulum, we have been brought back to the time in which the law is to be interpreted at least in the Punjab without the aid of those who have been trained in the profession of the law (Cheers).

Take again the educational policy of the Government. Yesterday you recorded a resolution in which you expressed your regret that the graduates of the Calcutta University have been deprived of a great right which they possessed. The policy of Government in the matter of education, at least so far as we have been able to understand it, is a policy of centralisation. Recently the Government of Bengal, no doubt at the instance of the Government of India, issued a resolution on the Text-books the object of which apparently is to assume to itself if not the right of control, at any rate, the right of regulation in regard to Text-Books in schools which are independent of Government. This really amounts to the assumption of an extraordinary power. But barring these reservations, we are prepared to render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's (Cheers) and unto God the things that are God's. Our attitude, and I speak of the attitude of the Congress, and if I may be permitted to say so, the attitude of the educated

community is not one of natural hostility to the official hierarchy in this country (Hear, hear). Officials are the servants of the Crown. We are the subjects of the Crown (Hear, hear). It is their duty to serve us (Hear, hear). It is our duty to co-operate with them (Hear, hear and cheers) in the discharge of their high and sacred functions. There ought to be mutual concord and fellowship between the officials and the non-officials (Hear, hear); and by our joint efforts we can make this Empire of the Queen, the chosen abode of happiness and joy to the many millions who own Her Majesty's supremacy (Cheers). And why should this blessed consummation be deferred? I know, Sir, that we are at times unpleasant. It is our business to criticise the conduct of officials, so far as that conduct is involved in their public measures. But criticism is both the penalty as well as the privilege of the great. The man in the street is not criticised; but it is only those who are placed in the exalted positions of responsibility who are approached by the critic in order that the light of public opinion may guide and warn and instruct them. Englishmen are devoted to their duty. Duty is there watch-word. Why should they object when we, in the discharge of a stern duty, are obliged to criticise them (Cheers)? I may here also say this as a word of warning to the critics themselves, and I feel the less hesitation in giving this advice as I am one of the critics myself (laughter). I say I am one of the critics not by virtue of my position here, but by the frequency of my appearance elsewhere. Well, Sir, the word of advice that I should like to give to the critics is summed up in the well-known English phrase. "Naught extenuate or aught set down in malice." Harsh, bitter and exaggerated criticisms serve no useful purpose; and those who are perched on the high pedestal of the critic should bear in mind that for the most part those against whom their shafts are directed are not in a position to reply to them (Hear, hear). Therefore the obligation is all the more incumbent upon the critics

to be moderate and temperate in the criticisms they indulge in.

Well, Sir, subject to these reservations, this Congress express its deep gratitude to His Excellency on the benevolence of his famine policy and for his earnest zeal in upholding the interests of law and justice as evidenced by his resolution on the Rangoon outrage case and the regulations relating to shooting passes issued by His Excellency. Lord Curzon considers himself the embodiment of Imperial justice. We hear a good deal in these days of the Imperial spirit. The Imperial spirit is a meaningless phrase, unless it is accompanied by the firm resolve to ensure equal right and equal justice among all the classes of Her Majesty's subjects, no matter in what part of the Empire they may reside (Hear, hear). Justice is the bulwark of thrones and States—justice between man and man, justice between man and woman—justice between the rulers and the ruled—justice between the black and the white, that justice which emanates from the footstep of the throne of the Supreme (cheers). No Government can with impunity ignore the claims of justice. A Government which deliberately does that, paves the way for its own ruin. Justice, says Carlyle in one of his inimitable passages in the French Revolution, *revenge*s itself with compound interest in dire acts of ruin and destruction. 'The truth is written by an invisible Hand upon the scrolls of Time and proclaimed by an invisible Voice in the pages of History.' Sir, that is the writing on the wall since Time was, and that will continue to be the writing on the wall when Time resolves itself into Eternity. Sir, it is a matter of the greatest gratification to us to be able to know that the English rulers of India have from the earliest times recognised the sanctity of this principle. The Court of Directors among the injunctions which they sent to their servants in India, sought to impress upon them that their great duty was not only to dispense justice, but to convince the people that justice has been done. Lord Lytton, speaking from

his place in the Viceregal Council, re-echoing the sentiments of Sir James Fitz Stephen, said: "A single instance of conscious failure of justice was more disastrous to British rule than a great reverse sustained upon an Asiatic battlefield" (Cheers). Lord Ampthill replying the other day to the toast proposed in his honour at the banquet given to him by the Liberal Union Federation made use of these pregnant words;—"Wherever the authority of the Queen-Empress is paramount, the claims of justice must also be paramount." Lord Curzon speaking last year in the historic city of Lucknow before an assembly of talukdars said that English veracity which is the main and inspiring motive of British justice has done more to establish, to consolidate and extend this magnificent empire than English valour or English intelligence. But, Sir, I regret to have to say that there is no class of cases in which there are more scandalous failures of justice than in that particular class of cases in which Europeans are the accused persons and natives of India are the aggrieved parties. It is an unsavoury subject, I mean only to call attention to two or three very important cases. Take the Rangoon outrage case. You remember the facts of the case. The culprits were tried but they were not punished. Justice was cheated of its dues. Why? Because there was a conspiracy of silence among the members of the Regiment. The only case of this kind in which I remember the claims of justice were fully satisfied was the case of Doctor Suresh Chunder Sircar of Barackpur. He was an esteemed friend of mine, Honorary Magistrate and Chairman of the Local Municipality, and a gentleman in the enjoyment of an extensive professional practice. He was murderously assaulted by three European soldiers in a fit of drunkenness and he died in the course of 24 hours. A telegram was sent of the event to our Congress organ, *India*, and it was published in all the leading newspapers in England. A question was asked in the House of Commons by Sir William Wedderburn, and I believe, Lord George

Hamilton telegraphed the information to Lord Elgin who was at that time Viceroy. The authorities took such vigorous measures as to lead to the punishment of the three accused men who were tried and convicted of grievous hurt and sentenced to the highest punishment to which they were liable under the provision of the law. I am bound to say one word by way of parenthesis, that in regard to these cases some of them of a very grievous nature, educated Anglo-Indian opinion strongly condemns them (Cheers). I have had the opportunity of talking this matter over with officials of the highest position. I refer to a conversation which I had about six weeks ago with an official who occupies a conspicuous position in Bengal. He said, "Mr. Banerjea, I cannot approve of your agitation for the separation of judicial and executive functions, but I am bound to say this—that point is lent to this agitation by the scandalous failures of justice in cases where Europeans are the accused and Indians are the aggrieved parties,"—"scandalous failures" were his words and not mine. "In those cases in which European soldiers are concerned your countrymen have a substantial grievance." This is what he said in connection with the facts of a case to which I shall presently call your attention.

You remember that about two months ago, a soldier attached to Fort William shot dead a poor tailor. This poor tailor had complained against him, got him court-martialled and imprisoned for a couple of weeks. After his release he took his gun and deliberately shot the man dead. He was arrested and he put in a plea of insanity, and the plea was accepted by the Judge. The most curious thing was that nobody in the Regiment had ever heard that he was of an unsound mind. The Colonel of the Regiment, an impartial English gentleman, gave evidence before the Presidency Magistrate, and said "never had I even heard the whisper of a suspicion regarding the sanity of this man." There is the further fact that the preliminary enquiry was held for three days. For the first two days the man was perfectly sane and on the

third day he suddenly became insane. How did he become insane? A lawyer came on the scene. I cannot understand how the presence of lawyers should have the tendency to make people insane. If that is so, we are in dangerous proximity to some of our esteemed friends (Loud cheers). There is the fact that a lawyer appeared on the scene and the man promptly enough appeared insane. He could not understand the questions put to him and returned irrelevant answers. The Presidency Magistrate was so convinced of the utter unsoundness of the plea that he committed the man to the Sessions where, however, the Judge, the Jury and the Doctors came to the conclusion that the man was of an unsound mind and was not in a position to make his defence. Well, Sir, facts such as these, have justified Lord Curzon to take the measures which he has taken. With regard to the shooting pass regulations, I may be permitted to refer for a moment to the difference of opinion which prevails. I find that a section of the Indian Press condemns the regulations, and I find curiously enough the *Pioneer* also condemns the regulations. Well, Sir, when I find the *Pioneer* condemning any measure I feel a sort of sneaking partiality for it. I am reminded in this connection of what the late Richard Cobden used to say :—" When I find that the *Times* condemns me " he used to say, " I feel I am in the right, but if the *Times* praise me, I am very much in doubt whether what I did was right." My sentiments with regard to the *Pioneer* are cast very much in the same mould. But, Sir, to my friends of the Indian Press, I wish to say this that their criticisms are based upon a forecast of the possible consequence which may accrue from the measure which has yet to be tried. At any rate, it is the embodiment of the earnest desire of the Government of India to prevent these sad occurrences. Look at some of these regulations.

The first rule is to this effect, that no soldier or non-commissioned officer or a warrant officer is to be furnished with any of these passes unless he has got a

good conduct badge. It is only men of approved good conduct who are to have these passes, and then they are to be accompanied by an Indian interpreter ; they are not to go within 500 yards of a village or an enclosure, and they are not to shoot peafowls or monkeys and other animals ; they are to have no intercourse of any kind with the villagers ; and if any breach of these rules occur, they are liable to be court-martialled and punished. And this is the most important part of the regulations. If in consequence of any breach of these rules, any injury is done or any affray takes place and the offender is not discovered, then the corps or detachment is liable to be deprived of the privilege of obtaining shooting passes for a period not exceeding two years, the object being to put an end to the conspiracy of silence which proved so fatal to the interests of justice in the Rangoon case. On the other hand, a similar obligation is put upon the villagers. They are not to take the law into their own hands, and if they commit an unwarrantable act of violence upon the soldiers, they are liable to have a punitive police placed on them. Whatever may be the criticisms passed upon the shooting pass regulations, they represent the earnest desire of the Government of India to protect the community against assaults of this kind, which, I hope, will become rare with the advance of sound and enlightened opinion in the army.

Then, Sir, I go to the next branch of the resolution which is, that we do record our acknowledgments to His Excellency the Viceroy for the benevolence of his famine policy. Yesterday you discussed at length the famine policy of the Government of India, and I have no desire to take up your time unnecessarily. It must be admitted that the famine of this year was the greatest famine of this century, and it must be recorded to the credit of the Government of India that it put forth efforts commensurate with the severity of the crisis. Look at the facts. The famine covered an area of 400,000 square miles

and affected a population of 60 millions, one-fourth of the entire population of the Indian Empire and one and a half times that of the United Kingdom. The cost to Government will amount to 10 crores of rupees up to 31st March. The national loss is estimated at 75 crores of rupees, and the mortality at 750,000 souls. This is a terrible record. The *Pioneer* in criticising these figures made some disparaging remarks with regard to famine measures adopted by the former rulers of India. Sir, I am not called upon to vindicate them. It is not for one moment to be supposed that they could cope with the benevolent famine measures of the great British Empire prompted by the highest humanity. But they did what they could. There never was a more unsympathetic ruler than Aurangzeb, yet the fact remains that he rendered the most generous aid in the great famine which overtook his empire. The famine relief operations of Akbar are also entitled to commendation. However that may be, we entirely endorse the opinion of the Viceroy when he said that he believed that his measures would inspire public confidence and would be worthy of the trust of the people of India. These measures, I desire to say on behalf of this Congress, have evoked our deepest gratitude (Cheers), but we desire to appeal to His Excellency to go a step further and to add to the glory of his achievement. It is not enough to mitigate suffering, it is necessary to prevent it. Prevention is better than cure. Therefore it would be a lasting monument of his Excellency's rule if after making such enquires as we have suggested, he could see his way to formulate definite measures which would prevent the periodical recurrence of famines in this great country. Cuvier somewhere remarks in one of his works that famines are impossible in this age, and so they are impossible in Europe, but not in this fabled land of wealth, the gorgeous Ind, overflowing with milk and honey and abounding in the good things of this world. Here famines are matters of everyday occurrence; they occur with the periodicity of the seasons. In



*this connection, I desire to call your attention to the excellent pamphlet which has been written by my friend, Mr. Prithwis Chunder Roy, the Assistant Secretary to the Congress Committee, Calcutta. He has made an exhaustive study of the subject and from him we learn that under British rule there have been at least two famines in every 10 or 12 years, excepting Bengal, and two big famines in every century. He has given us a table showing the famines under British rule.*

There was a famine in 1769-70; there was a famine in 1783-84. The famine of 1769 occurred in Bengal and that of 1783 in the North-West Provinces. The famine of 1790-92 affected portions of the Madras Presidency and the famine of 1824-26 affected Madras and Bombay. The famine of 1833-34 occurred in Madras, Bombay and Hyderabad. The famine of 1838 affected the N. W. Provinces and Rajputana. The famine of 1860-61 affected the N. W. Provinces and the Punjab. The famine of 1864-63 desolated Orissa, Behar, North Bengal, Madras, Mysore, Hyderabad and Bombay. The famine of 1868-69 affected Rajputana, the N. W. Provinces, Central Provinces, Bombay and the Punjab. The famine of 1873-74 affected Behar, Bengal, Oudh, and the N. W. Provinces. The famine of 1876-78 occurred in Southern India, the N. W. Provinces, Oudh and the Punjab. The famine of 1896-97 broke out in Western India and the Central Provinces. The famine of 1899-1900 affected Western India, Rajputana, the Central Provinces and parts of the Punjab and the N. W. Provinces. This statement is interesting, and it is suggestive of a very important conclusion, and to that conclusion I desire to call the attention of the Congress. We had two famines in Bengal before the Permanent Settlement. The famine of 1769-70 was the first famine we had under the British rule. In 1783 the Permanent Settlement was granted. Since the Permanent Settlement, we had two famines, one was the Orissa famine and the other was the Behar famine of 1874. The first famine

affected a part of the country which does not come under the operation of the Permanent Settlement. The Behar famine was a fiction of the imagination. It was a mere invention—for what purpose it is difficult to say. That this was a fiction is abundantly shown in the admirable pamphlet known as the black pamphlet written by a late member of the Civil Service, Mr. J. O'Donnel. This conclusion is further borne out by the fact that there was not a single case of death arising out of that famine, whereas the mortality in other famines has to be counted by thousands. Therefore I am driven to this irresistible conclusion that the Permanent Settlement is a guarantee against the recurrence of famines. Bengal has had the Permanent Settlement since 1793 and Bengal is exceptionally free from the visitations of famine. Of course I do not say that the Bengal system should be extended to the other parts of the Empire. Instead of there being a middleman let the contract of settlement be between the Government and the ryot. I am perfectly certain that if a Permanent Settlement of that kind could be extended to the whole of India, that would be the most effective safeguard against the recurrence of famines. Lord Curzon has appointed a Commission to enquire into this matter. But this Commission is very narrow issues placed before it. The question of famine is an imperial problem and has to be dealt with in an imperial style. The occurrence of drought will not account for the recurrence of these famines. We are again brought face to face with the question of Indian poverty and we appeal to Lord Curzon on behalf of this Congress to signalise his administration by instituting an enquiry, and exhaustive enquiry, into the causes of these famines, and by taking such steps as may prevent their recurrence.

I do not know, Sir, that I ought to detain you any longer. We hope and trust that Lord Curzon will hold out, in the words of the manifesto of the British Committee of the National Congress, the olive branch of peace between the

representatives of the official hierarchy and the representatives of the popular party. Sir, speaking of that manifesto, it comes to me in the shape of a trumpet call to duty. It comes to me as the voice of the illustrious men who have consecrated their lives to the services of India, and every word of the manifesto is deserving of our most careful consideration. The signatories, the illustrious signatories, to the manifesto say that we are in the midst of a crisis and that we are at the parting of ways. There can be no doubt that the forces of reaction are at the present moment in the ascendant in the counsels of mankind; and however great may be the measure of our devotion to the Congress cause, our faith in its ultimate triumph, we are after all men, creatures of circumstances, dominated by the influences of the ages, in which we live. We cannot emancipate ourselves from our surroundings; the greatest and best of us must be shaped, guided and instructed by the influences of his environment. But let us see to it that in the tide of re-action which has set in with such irresistible force, our cause, for the sake of which so many of us have made so many sacrifices, is not wiped out of existence, and our cherished aspirations are not shipwrecked beyond redemption. Nothing is more trying to a party than adversity and the spirit of despondency which adversity creates. But adversity also is the foster-mother of the noblest virtues. The virtues of endurance, fortitude and patience are nowhere better learnt than in the school of adversity (Cheers). In the midst of the darkness and gloom which surround us, let us possess our souls in patience in the firm conviction that the time will come when there will be a turn in the tide, and that the dark clouds which have gathered round us will disappear before the morning light of liberty and truth and justice (Cheers). Show me the age or the country where the forces of darkness have finally triumphed over the forces of light; show me the age or the country where the spirit of re-action has permanently checked the spirit of progress. Progress is the order of nature, the

dispensation of Divine Providence; progress is written in characters of light in the ineffaceable pages of history; progress is the divine mandate, the ordinance of God. We cannot stand where we are; we must make up our minds either to go forward or to go backward. I ask you, men of the Congress, to make your choice. Will you go back or march forward (cries of "forward") in the career of progress (Cheers). I was sure of that response from the assembled culture and intelligence of India. But here again, I am confronted with a difficulty. The illustrious leaders of the Congress movement, the signatories to the manifesto, tell us that we want younger men to carry on the burden of our work. Where are these young men? Where are our recruits? Where are the missionaries of the new faith, the preachers of the new dispensation, the pontiffs of the new creed? Where are those men whose lips have been touched by the celestial fire, whose hearts aglow with the divine enthusiasm? Where are those men who are prepared to go from town to town from district to district, from province to province, like the apostles of old, and preach the saving lessons of the Congress? (Cheers). Where are they? Oh? where are those men who will keep alive the sacrificial fire which the Congress movement has kindled in our midst? They say that the enthusiasm of our earlier days is waning in our midst. If that is so, now that we are on the threshold of a new century, now that we stand on the sacred soil of the Punjab, associated with the most memorable achievements of our race, let us take a solemn vow that we dedicate ourselves to the regeneration, the moral and political regeneration, of this great country. No higher, no nobler, no holier resolve can animate us, and if the second Congress held in the Punjab can inspire us with a new fervour, a new devotion, a new resolve to rise to the height of our situation; to overcome the crisis, then I am sure this Congress will not have been held in vain—it will have done a service worthy of the best traditions of the Congress and it will have advanced the cause of Indian

reform. We are in the midst of a crisis. Let us take note of the fact and firmly resolve in our hearts to meet the crisis with all the enthusiasm, devotion and fervour that we are possessed of and the blessings of God will sanctify our efforts (Loud cheers).

## THE TOWN HALL MEETING.

FEBRUARY, 1901.

DEATH OF THE QUEEN.

LOYAL DEMONSTRATION.

Hon'ble Babu Surendranath Banerjea said :—Your Excellencies, your Honour, Maharajas, ladies and gentlemen :—I deem it a privilege—I will add, a melancholy privilege—to be associated with the demonstration of to-day. We meet here under your Excellency's presidency in this great historic hall of ours which has so often re-echoed to the accents of our grief, to record a great national sorrow and to renew a solemn national allegiance (cheers). A great and a striking personality has passed away from the stage of the world's affairs—a beneficent influence has been withdrawn from among mankind—a bright example of a stainless and noble life, adorning a throne, has disappeared. (Applause) Humanity has felt the shock. A wail has gone forth from the civilized world. The nations are in tears. We here in India have felt the Queen's death in the light of a personal and domestic bereavement. The Queen, though she was separated from us by religion and language and manners—by, indeed, the whole circle of differences which separate one community from another—had long been received into the bosom of every Indian household—had long been enthroned in every Indian heart. Her long reign, her deep sympathy for India and her peoples—her ideal woman-

ly character—her steadfast devotion to the sacred memory of her adored husband, exercised a fascinating influence upon a highly susceptible and emotional race like ourselves (Applause). She seemed to us to be the living representation of our own Seeta and Sabitri of legendary fame. We seemed to live in the golden age, presided over by one of the long-lost personalities of the golden age. And our people, too, in their trials and their tribulations—and they were many and severe—wistfully looked to the Throne and its illustrious occupant in the firm confidence that help would come, and they were never deceived.

Never were their anticipations more abundantly fulfilled than in the recent crisis of the famine which was tided over with such consummate statesmanship by your Excellency's Government. The news of the Queen's death came upon us here with all the crushing oppressiveness of a domestic calamity. The demonstrations of the last few days have testified to the universality and the intensity of that sorrow which has cast a gloom over every Indian household. Old men, hoary with age and bent down with the weight of years, cannot remember to have seen a spectacle such as it was our privilege or our misfortune to have witnessed on Saturday last—when Calcutta poured forth its thousands and its hundreds of thousands into the great Maidan of our city to take their part and share in the great national mourning. (Applause).

But the Sovereign never dies, and while we weep we cry out "Long Live the King"; and with the dying accents of our lamentation over the honoured remains of our revered sovereign we raise our hands in salutation to the new king, in the firm confidence that in His Majesty's reign there will be a renewal of that career of beneficence which has consecrated his illustrious mother's name in our grateful hearts—which has cemented the fabric of the British Indian Empire and has broad-based it upon the affections, the gratitude and the contentment of our people (Applause). We proclaim

our allegiance to our new sovereign—to the constitutional principles which he represents, the reign of Law and order, combining stability with progress, of which he is the appointed guardian and protector. My lord, our allegiance is based upon sentiment and reason alike, upon the deep-seated instincts of our Oriental nature and upon the highest considerations of practical expediency.

To the Hindu the Throne is the embodiment of the highest virtues. The greatest of our Epic poets has sung :—The King is the truth of the truth-teller, the virtue of the virtuous, the dignity of the dignified—the lord, master, protector of the indigent, the needy and the suffering (cheers). In honouring the sovereign, in adorning his personality, we render homage to the princely qualities which his office represents. There is no name in ancient Indian legends which excites a deeper love or more pious reverence than the name of Rama, the lord of Ajudhya. He stands forth the Indian history and before the Indian world as the incarnation of the the noblest virtues. The brave in war, the generous in peace, the sagacious in Council, the dutiful son, the devoted husband, the affectionate brother the name of this warrior-king strikes the tenderest chord in the heart of every true-born Hindu. (Cheers).

Our allegiance, thus based upon the possession of high moral qualities, transcends all considerations of race and religion ; and we freely offered our homage to the greatest of the Mahomedan kings—to the illustrious Akbar and his illustrious descendants, and our poet's Sang *Delhiswaroba Jagadishwaroba*—the lord of Delhi is the lord of the Universe (Loud cheers). Such being, my lord, our traditions of loyalty, our hearts overflow with love and gratitude for the new Sovereign who comes into the rich possession of a heritage, sanctified by the virtues of his great mother and by the blessings which she so freely conferred upon the people of India. The noblest of these blessings is the gift of the Proclamation—the Magna Charta of our rights and the golden

rule of your Excellency's conduct, as your Excellency was pleased to observe (cheers). It is, indeed, our Magna Charta, but not wrung as of old by rebellious barons on the field of Runnymede, but the spontaneous gift of a beneficent Sovereign (Loud applause).

The more we study the circumstances connected with the issue of the Proclamation, the greater becomes our veneration for the memory of our late Queen and deeper our attachment to Her Royal House. The Queen was most anxious that the Proclamation should in every way be worthy of the historic occasion on which it was issued and of the sovereign whose name it was to bear. She wrote to Lord Stanley, then Secretary of State for India, requesting him to write the Proclamation in his own elegant English, and she went on to observe that it should be written in a way worthy of a female Sovereign addressing a vast and a distant population. (Cheers). My Lord, our King is the son and heir of such a mother. We know him. He knows us. He was impressed by what he saw here.

We were impressed by his genial personality and his warm sympathies. If I am permitted to say so, I will venture to observe that His Majesty has begun well and that in the Government of India he proposes to follow the traditions of his great mother. In a communication addressed to your Excellency His Majesty was pleased to observe that the happiness of the Princes and the peoples of India would be to him matters of the highest interest and concern. In a despatch which has appeared in to-day's morning papers, His Majesty renews this assurance and declares that he would endeavour to promote the general well being of all classes of his Indian Subjects and thus merit their loyalty and affection.

His Majesty has afforded practical evidence of his desire to govern in the light of these declarations by the appointment of his brother, the Duke of Connaught, as Commander-in-Chief of His Majesty's forces in India—an appointment which, let me observe, has given universal satisfaction to all



classes of the population in India (Applause). My Lord, I have observed that our allegiance is based upon the highest considerations of practical expediency. As a representative of the educated community of India, and I am entitled to speak on their behalf and in their name—I may say that we regard British rule in India as a dispensation of Divine Providence. England is here for the highest and the noblest purposes of history. She is here to rejuvenate an ancient people, to infuse into them the vigour, the virility and the robustness of the West, and so pay off the long-standing debt, accumulating since the morning of the world, which the West owes to the East (Applause). We are anxious for the permanence of British rule in India, not only as a guarantee for stability and order, but because with it are bound up the best prospects of our political advancement. To the English people has been entrusted in the councils of Providence the high function of teaching the nations of the earth the great lesson of constitutional liberty, of securing the ends of stable government, largely tempered by popular freedom. This glorious work has been nobly begun in India. It has been resolutely carried on by a succession of illustrious Anglo-Indian statesmen whose names are enshrined in our grateful recollections. Marvellous as have been the industrial achievements of the Victorian era in India, they sink into insignificance when compared with the great moral trophies which distinguished that epoch. Roads have been constructed ; rivers have been spanned. Telegraph and Railway lines have been laid down, times and space have been annihilated, Nature and the appliances of Nature have been made to minister to the wants of man. But these are nothing when compared to the bold, decisive, statesmanlike measures which have been taken in hand for the intellectual, the moral and the political regeneration of my countrymen. (Applause) Under English influences the torpor of ages has been dissipated, the pulsations of a new life have been communicated to the people ; an inspiring sense of public

duty has been evolved ; the spirit of curiosity has been stirred, and a moral revolution, the most momentous in our annals, culminating in the transformation of the national ideals and aspirations, has been brought about. (Loud cheers).

To the Sovereign of an Empire under whose auspices these great results have been achieved, we owe our allegiance.

We owe him something more. We owe him our gratitude. We owe him even something more precious than gratitude. We owe him our love, flowing freely and spontaneously from the fountains of our heart, mixed with our prayers, addressed to the God of all nations, the King of Kings, for his personal safety and happiness and for the continued prosperity of that Empire to which we are all so proud to belong and over which in the providence of God he has been summoned to rule, and which we are confident he will rule, with wisdom and justice and mercy, so that in the fullness of time it will be said of him that he was the worthy son of a worthy mother and of a great and a sainted sire (Loud and prolonged cheers).

## CALCUTTA CONGRESS, 1901.

### WIDER EMPLOYMENT OF NATIVES OF INDIA.

Babu Surendranath Banerjea, who rose amidst loud and prolonged cheers, in moving the 9th Resolution, said :—

Mr. President, Brother Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, —“ That this Congress once again records its deep regret that the labours of the Public Service Commission have not produced the results which were anticipated and this Congress repeats its conviction that no satisfactory solution of the question is possible unless effect is given to the resolution of the House of Commons of the 2nd June 1893 in favour of holding the examination for the Indian Civil Services simultaneously in England and India.

That in this connection this Congress desires to express its profound disappointment at the policy of the Government in respect of the wider employment of natives of India in the higher offices of the Minor Civil Services, such as the Police, the Custom, the Telegraph, the Forest, the Survey, the Opium, as involving their practical exclusion from these offices and as being opposed to the terms of the Queen's Proclamation and the recommendations of the Public Service Commission; and this Congress prays that the Government will be pleased to take early steps to remedy the injustice thus done to the claims of the people of this country."

Brother Delegates,—This is an old question which in substance has been included in the Congress programme ever since the Congress has come into existence. It is a painful necessity which compels us to renew this demand from year's end to year's end. But our rulers will not listen to us. Inaccessible to the voice of reason or of remonstrance, wrapped up in the sense of their own infallibility with regard to this matter they turn a deaf ear to our representations. But we must continue to repeat them in season and out of season, until we will win by our persistency what has been refused to the justice of our cause. We Congressmen never confess to a defeat (hear, hear). We are like the veterans of Waterloo who never knew that they had lost a battle. With us defeat means a temporary reverse, the temporary frustration of our hopes and aspirations—perhaps the temporary suspension of our activities in a particular direction, but it never does or can mean the definite abandonment of of a programme which we have deliberately resolved upon (cheers). Such a programme must be renewed again and again until the clamour of an irrational opposition has been hushed into silence and the moral forces which we have helped to create, to foster and to promote, working noiselessly it may be but steadily in the bosom of society and operating through the medium of an enlightened public opinion have established their complete and triumphant

sway. (cheers). We believe in reiteration—we believe in persistency—above all we believe in the justice of our cause, We believe that so long as there is a God in Heaven, Who shapes and controls the destinies of men and nations, Who regulates the march of human affairs, Who compels rulers of men, be they autocrats or the representatives, or constitutional sovereigns, to conform to the paramountcy of the moral laws; our cause is bound to triumph; for it is founded upon the highest justice (cheers). If justice to individuals be binding upon Governments, justice to communities is of paramount obligation which no Government can set at naught with impunity to its highest and truest interests. In the intoxication of power—in the frenzy which is begotten of long continued and uninterrupted success—this elementary principle is apt to be ignored. But it is writ large on the pages of history, and the annals of mankind teach the impressive lesson that Governments are strongest when they are most liberal and most popular. Alexander conquered the world, less by the prowess of his arms, more by the liberality of his policy. The master of Persia, with his feet planted upon the neck of the Persian people, he insisted upon Persianizing himself and his great nobles. Rome, the mistress of the world (mistress even now in a wider sense, in the domain of religion, of law and jurisprudence), Rome retained her supremacy over men and affairs, not so much by the splendour of her military achievements, as by the generous extension of her much-prized gift of citizenship to the remotest parts of her conquered dominions (cheers). We invite the Government of India to accept this principle, not merely in theory, but as an integral, effective and permanent, of its policy. For we desire the permanence of British rule in India, for with it are bound up the best prospects of our political and material development. But we cannot ignore the fact that British rule, as at present constituted, represents a foreign domination, and it is equally notorious that all foreign domination lacks the elements

of stability and permanence. Therefore is it that we are anxious to nationalize the Government, and so relieve it of these elements which are calculated to jeopardize its permanence, and broadbase the Empire of the king upon the gratitude, the love and the devoted allegiance of the millions of our population (cheers). Our position is enormously strengthened by declaration of the Government, above all by the Proclamation of Her late Majesty the Queen, the Magna Charta of our rights. I am happy to be able to say that there has been no disposition on the part of the illustrious men who from time to time have filled the high office of Viceroy to belittle the significance of this solemn document. On the contrary, they have always regarded it as a sacred injunction issued on a historic occasion, imposing a solemn duty upon the rulers of India in relation to the people of India. I will not trouble you with the opinions of preceding Viceroys. The latest pronouncement is that of His Excellency Lord Curzon. His Excellency observed that it was the golden rule of his conduct. We take our stand upon the Proclamation and call for its redemption. We take our stand upon the Proclamation and appeal to His Excellency to be guided by the golden rule of his conduct.

Sir, it has been proposed to inscribe the words of the Proclamation upon a brass tablet to be raised in the All India Memorial Hall. May the words of the Proclamation be graven deep on the hearts and consciences of our rulers! May they be to them the table of their Commandments, to be obeyed by them unswervingly and faithfully for the honour of their late sovereign, the glorification of their country and the fulfilment of the highest ends of British rule in India! (cheers). We hold that the Proclamation will not be redeemed and justice will not be done to the people of India unless and until simultaneous examinations for the Indian Civil Services are held in India and England. In this view we are supported by high and distinguished authorities. So far back as 1862 a Committee of the India office was

appointed, consisting of eminent Anglo-Indian officials, who held the view which has been put forth in this resolution. They were of opinion that the plainest considerations of justice to the natives of India demanded that simultaneous examinations should be held in India as well as in England. Their report was not unanimous but it was unanimous on this point. But we have yet a higher authority to quote. There was no more strenuous opponent of Indian aspirations than the late Lord Lytton, for he deliberately proposed to close the open competitive examination for the Indian Civil Services as against natives of India. Even Lord Lytton was constrained to admit that in the matter of their admission to high offices the people of India had been cheated of their dues, and that the Government had broken to the hope the words of promise which they had uttered to the ear.

We express dissatisfaction with the recommendations of the Public Service Commission, because they decided the question of simultaneous examination against the weight of evidence. The Public Service Commission examined 597 witnesses. Out of them 361 were in favour of, and 163 witnesses were against, simultaneous examinations ; 73 witnesses were among the doubtful ones. Thus nearly 70 per cent of those who were examined were in favour of the principle of simultaneous examination. And it is a very remarkable fact, perhaps not generally known, that there is a strong body of European opinion in favour of simultaneous examinations. I will now mention the names of those distinguished men who gave evidence in support of our view, and they were gentlemen who, during their official career developed no decided partiality in favour of Indian aspirations for liberal and generous treatment in the matter of high appointments. Amongst those in favour of simultaneous examinations were some names which are familiar to the people of these provinces, such as those of Sir Alfred Croft, late Director of Public Instruction, Mr. Tawney, late Principal of the Presidency College, and Mr. Kisch, late

Post-master General, now Municipal Secretary to Government. There were also distinguished personages outside these Provinces, such as Mr. Sime, Director of Public Instruction in the Punjab and Mr. Tupper of the Punjab Civil Service who supported our view. It goes without saying that the Hon'ble Mr. H. J. S. Cotton, the respected Chief-Commissioner of Assam, (cheers) and our great and good friend, Mr. Allen Hume, (cheers) were also in favour of holding simultaneous examinations.

Well, Gentlemen, we have heard a great deal about Mahomedan opposition to the Congress and that opposition is said to be founded on our adhesion to the programme of simultaneous examinations. Now, let us examine the drift of Mahomedan evidence as given before the Public Service Commission, at least in Bengal. Bengal is the one province in the Indian Empire which contains the largest level of Mahomedan population. Sixteen representative witnesses were summoned by the Public Service Commission to give evidence before them, and what was the drift of their evidence? Out of 16 witnesses, 10 were in favour of simultaneous examinations, two were doubtful, and four were against. And amongst these ten there are some whose names are names of honour amongst the Mahomedans of this Province, who will find a permanent place in the annals of Mahomedan greatness. Foremost among them was the late Nawab Bahadur Abdul Lateef who was not known to be a friend of the Congress, and yet when called upon to express an opinion on the subject, he gave evidence in favour of simultaneous examinations. Then, Sir, there was Moulvi Abdul Jubbar an honoured and respected name throughout these provinces, now Prime Minister of Bhopal. He was in favour of simultaneous examinations. Moulvi Khodabux, late Chief Justice of Hyderabad, vice President of the Reception Committee of the Congress, an extract from whose letter I read out yesterday, he, too, was in favour of simultaneous examinations. And last but not least there

was Mr. Shrafudin, Barrister-at-Law, of Bankipur. Mr. Shrafudin belonged to us, but he now sits on the fence in an attitude of anxiety and suspense which is painful to his friends, and must be galling to his own sense of self-respect; (Laughter and cheers). It will thus be seen that those members of the Mahomedan Community who object to simultaneous examinations make it a ground of their abstention from the Congress, are arrayed in opposition to the views of the most illustrious of their co-religionists. Nay, more, they do a grave injustice to the great community to which they belong. They forget the past glories of their race. They forget that although the Hindus have had a start of fifty years over them in the matter of high education, our Mahomedan fellow-countrymen are rapidly coming to the front and are gallantly holding their own in honourable competition with the elite of our youth (cheers). Sir, not many years ago, Mr. Tyebji, the bearer of an honoured name, was the first man of his year in the final examination for the Indian Civil Service. Another Mahomedan gentleman from the Punjab quite recently occupied a high place in the Cambridge Mathematical Tripos examination and won for himself an equally distinguished position among the selected candidates for the Indian Civil Service. I think it was only year before last when a Mahomedan student from Bankipur was the first man of his year at the First Arts Examination. All these circumstances ought to inspire us with hope as regards the future of the Mahomedan community in India. That hope has been accentuated by recent events. We Hindus, rejoice to find that our Mahomedan fellow-subjects have shaken off their political torpor (cheers). The apathy which paralyzed their energies has given place to serious reflection on their present political situation. A visible wave of unrest is agitating the Mahomedan community in India. Out of a total number of about one thousand delegates attending the Congress there are so many as 100 Mahomedan delegates. The portals of the Congress are wide open for their reception



(cheers). We shall welcome them as brothers, animated by a common sentiment, living upon a common hope and fired by a common enthusiasm (cheers). Who will sunder ties which nature has forged with her own hands? (Cheers.) I know that some of your leaders—I will correct myself and say your so-called leaders—have essayed this impossible task. Vain effort. Success can never be theirs. The moral sense of the community will rise in revolt against an enterprise which is opposed to the mandate of nature. (cheers).

The second part of the resolution deals with the question of the Minor Civil Services. It deplores the policy of the Government of India which amounts to a policy of the exclusion of our countrymen from the higher appointments in the Minor Civil Services. As regards the Indian Civil Service, as the result of our agitation, we have gained some ground. As regards the Minor Civil Services, as the result of our apathy we continue to be excluded from the higher appointments. As regards the Indian Civil Service, one-sixth of the listed appointments have been thrown open to us, and I am thankful to be able to say that in Bengal the Government has made a real effort to carry out this policy. As regards the Minor Civil Services, there are departments where we do not hold even one twentieth part of the higher appointments—there are departments from which our ostracism is complete, where the representatives of the dominant race hold all the loaves and fishes of office. Let us look at the figures:—They are those for Bengal. In the Forest Department the total number of high appointments are 24,—22 held by Europeans and 2 by our countrymen. In the Customs the total number of appointments are 33, 31 held by Europeans, one only by a native, the other which is vacant will probably go to a European. Preventive Service,—157 appointments; all held by Europeans. There is a big zero for us. (A voice from the delegates—"Preventive Service means the prevention of the children of the soil"). Yes, Preventive

Service means prevention of the children of the soil. I accept that interpretation. Survey,—appointments 13; all 13 the monopoly of the dominant race. We are not even fit to be good surveyors. Jail,—total number of high appointments 18; all held by Europeans. Police—112; including the Calcutta Police; of these, 103 are held by Europeans, 6 by natives and 3 are vacant. Telegraph—79 higher appointments, 75 held by Europeans, 4 by natives (shame). This is indeed a scandalous state of things. The gravity of the scandal is apparent to every one who is not blind to what is right. Nothing could be more scandalous than the state of things disclosed by the figures to which I have referred. Well, this was the state of things to which the Indian Association called attention. The Government of India took about 12 months to congregate the answer. The Government of India at last replied, and it replied with a big non-possumus. "We are unable to do anything in the matter, except that the appointments in the Appraiser's Department might be thrown open to you; but the higher offices in the other Departments must continue to be the monopoly of the dominant race"—so said Lord Curzon and his advisers. Well, gentlemen, with your permission, I won't take much of your time, I will refer to two or three extracts from the Government of India's letter with a view to show the reactionary character of the policy which is now in the ascendant in the councils of our rulers. With reference to the Salt Department not a single native of India holds any high appointment. But mark the anomaly. For sometime the head of the department was a native Civilian. The head could be native, the foot could be native, but the body must be European. I cannot understand it, but that is exactly the arrangement which was in force. The Government of India said in their reply to the Indian Association;—

"The Department is still in its infancy and the preventive operations now being introduced require an energy and physical capacity which ordinary natives of Bengal who

would apply for service in the Department do not possess. *Here after, when the illicit practices have been repressed* and the work of the Department has been normal, it will, the Government of India anticipate, be found feasible as it is in Madras to employ a larger proportion of pure natives."

We Bengalis are told that we have not even the physical capacity requisite for the operation of this Department. Well, gentlemen, I do not know what extraordinary physical capacity is required for the purpose of suppressing smuggling carried on by a few Bengali villagers, when those who attempt to suppress it are armed with all the power and authority of the Law. But it seems to me that the remark involves a gross libel on the Bengalis. Of course, I cannot claim to be a fine specimen of the physical energy and of the physical capacity of my race (Laughter). You can find such specimens amongst your volunteers (cheers). There are many of them quite ready to fight as you have had some evidence since yesterday (Laughter). But in any case it must be held that we possess sufficient physical energy for the purpose of suppressing smuggling. The Government however seem to ignore the physical development—the marvellous physical development—of modern Bengal. Look at our Cricket teams, our Football teams, our Gymnasiums, our Circuses our Lion-tamers (Hear, Hear and cheers) who in point of endurance, physical strength and nerve are capable of competing with the bravest men of the same profession in other parts of the world (cheers). The reply of the Government involves a calumny upon the Bengali race. If the Government does not want to give us these appointments, let it say so. Why indulge in calumny? Why does it not tell us:—"This application of yours does not suit us? It is not in harmony with our re-actionary policy." I think the Government of India has done us great injustice by refusing to us these high appointments, and has added insult to injury, by the reply given to the memorial of the Indian Association.

In the next place, Sir, the Government of India says in its reply that as regards the Jail Department the Government has ruled that Superintendents of Central Jails should be recruited from among members of the Indian Medical Service. I do not know that the much-gifted members of the Indian Medical Service have the exclusive monopoly of knowledge and wisdom which is not vouchsafed to others. These appointments are to be their monopoly; and you, Dr. Mullick, with all your learning, and you my friend Dr. Nilratan, with all your practical knowledge of the great profession to which you belong, you can never hope to be Superintendents of our Central Jails, because for sooth you do not belong to that heaven-appointed service which claims the monopoly and exclusive knowledge which the Government of India credits the Indian Medical Service with. Nor is this all, the Assistant Deputy Superintendents of Jails are required by the terms of the letter to possess European qualifications.

Gentlemen, I know European goods. They are easily distinguished by their trade-mark. But what are European qualifications, will you tell me? Are they specified anywhere? Are they not qualifications which are the gifts of a bountiful Providence, freely distributed amongst the entire human race, depending entirely on education, training and the environments of one's situation? Is it to be supposed that we do not possess the qualifications of Deputy Superintendents of Jail? If we do not, the fact implies the gravest reflection upon British rule—it means that under British rule we have become so degraded that we are unfit to be even Deputy Superintendents of Jails, but that under Mahomedan rule we were qualified to be the governors of Provinces, the commanders of armies and the confidential advisers of the Sovereign (cheers). Let our rulers look upon that picture and upon this and draw the moral (cheers).

Let me now pass on to the next and the last

item, i. e., the Opium Department. I am surprised at the observations of the Government. It is my respect, personal respect for Lord Curzon, which prevents me from giving expression to sentiments which rise uppermost in my mind and struggle for utterance. I restrain myself, because the dignity of this assembly requires the practice of self-restraint. At the same time the reply of the Government must be considered by us and the answer must be forthcoming. The Government say:—"This scheme of admitting natives of pure Asiatic descent to the Opium Department on a limited scale which was introduced experimentally in 1884 has not yet been found to be sufficiently successful, and the Government of India is, therefore, of opinion that the department must continue for the present to be recruited mainly from the European and Eurasian community." Now Sir, what does this mean? It means this—it means the complete reversal of the policy of Lord Ripon and of the recommendation of the Public Service Commission. Lord Ripon in 1884, by the terms of the resolution referred to, declared that one-fourth of the appointments in the Opium Department should be recruited from among the natives of India. The Public Service Commission went a step further. The Public Service Commission recommended that there should be equality in the treatment of all races, as regards the higher appointments in the Opium Department. Now the Government of India comes forward and says:—"You have been tried and have been found wanting, and we are not prepared still further to develop the principle which was accepted by Lord Ripon's Government."

Gentlemen, I dispute the position assumed by the Government. I say we have been tried but have not been found wanting, and I will ask you to say 'no' to this part of the reply of the Government. When you have heard me I am sure you will say no, an emphatic no, (voices of no, no) which will ring from one part of this hall to the other. There are 300 appointments in the Opium

Department. Out of those 300 appointments, 12 are filled by the natives of India, and 288 are filled by Europeans. In the administration report of the Department, 8 officers were singled out for honourable mention, and who do you think the officers were? Of these 8 officers, 4 were Europeans and the rest were natives. Now, Sir, it comes to this—that out of 288 European officers, 4 were qualified for honorable distinction, and out of only 12 native officers, 4 also were similarly qualified for honorable mention. Look at the facts here disclosed, and yet the Government of India says that we have been tried and have been found wanting. Sir, a more unfounded allegation has never appeared within the limits of a State paper. I am surprised that Lord Curzon, with his great capacity for work and his keen insight into details, did not observe the contradiction between the reply of Government of India and the facts stated in the administration report of the Department.

Upon such grounds as these our prayer has been rejected. We owe it to ourselves to renew it in season and out of season, until we get what we want. It is through failure that we mount to success. Failure is the school of discipline through which we must pass before we reach the destined goal of our aspirations. Look at the trials and tribulations of other nations. It is fortunate, thanks to the constitutional Government under which we live, that we are not called upon to face them, I have heard complaints of the comparative unsuccess of the Congress movement and of our waning enthusiasm. You, Sir, (referring to Mr. W. C. Bonerjee) were pleased yesterday to refer to it in your eloquent speech. I will not go over the ground, so happily trodden by you. But even if there was the shadow of a substratum of truth underlying the allegation, I would ask what are seventeen years in the life-time of a nation? I am unwilling to enter into a comparison between the Irish people and ourselves. But Irish history teaches an impressive lesson which we would do well to lay to heart. The

*Irish carried on an agitation for more than fifty years before they got the Catholic Emancipation Bill passed into law. They have now been agitating for Home Rule for more than one hundred years and they have not got it despite their perfect organization, their limitless resources and their solid strength in the House of Commons. Let us, therefore, possess our souls in patience in the certain conviction that the day is not far distant when the forces of liberalism will once again assert their ascendancy in England and a new impetus will be imparted to the cause of progress, not only in the united Kingdom but throughout the world wide dominions of the King-Emperor. You have the strongest motives to carry on the great work to which you are pledged. You are the descendants of a great race, the inheritors of illustrious traditions. Humanity owes a great debt to you. You were the instructors of mankind in the morning of the world. The hymns of your Vedic Rishis representing the first aspirations of infant humanity towards the divine ideal wafted through the distant ages, still linger in the air (cheers). Your country was the cradle of two religions, the nursery and the seat of the noblest ethical and spiritual conceptions (cheers). To the divinely inspired Buddha two-thirds of the human race still bent their knees in adoration (cheers). Will you not emulate the deeds of your sires? Will you not reconcile the past with the present, unite the past with the present—until they flow on a mighty stream converting towards the confines of eternity, fertilizing the unknown regions of the future, creating, fostering, stimulating a new, nobler, a grander civilization for Asia than any which the world has yet witnessed (cheers).*

I have also an appeal to make to our Mahomedan fellow-subjects. You were the instructors of Europe in the Middle Ages. You held aloft the torch of learning and civilization at a time when the monks in their cloistered recesses were formulating philosophical principles of doubtful utility to mankind. In India you were the inaugurators of a policy which remains

unsurpassed for its beneficence and which has won for you the love, the respect, the affectionate gratitude of your Hindu fellow-subjects (Loud cheers). Hindus and Mahomedans, Parsis and Sikhs and Christians, let us all combine in a constitutional way to effect the political enfranchisement of our people and the great God of nations will sanctify our patriotic efforts.

I have a word to say to our rulers. Next year will witness the coronation of the king. The year after, there will be a Proclamation Durbar to be held at Delhi; the capital of the Hindu and the Mahomedan Kings of India. Whenever a Durbar has been held, associated with the Sovereign, it has been marked by an accession of popular rights. The first Durbar held by Lord Canning on the assumption of the Government by the Crown witnessed the announcement of the Proclamation, the Magna Charta of our rights. The Imperial Assemblage Durbar of 1877 was associated with a proclamation which gave a new impetus to the wider employment of our countrymen in the more responsible offices of State. And last but not least, at the Jubilee Durbar of 1887, Lord Dufferin foreshadowed the expansion and the reform of the Councils. I hope and trust that the Proclamation Durbar to be held by Lord Curzon will not be an empty show, and idle pageant, a mere expenditure of the people's money with little benefit to the people, but that it will represent a new era in Indian history, and that it will be marked in the word of our first resolution, by the strengthening of free institutions, the expansions of popular rights and by a great and forward step taken for the gradual but complete redemption of the gracious promise contained in the Proclamation of Her late Majesty. (Loud and deafening Cheers).



## AHMEDABAD CONGRESS, 1902.

## ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT—

THE HON'BLE MR. SURENDRANATH BANERJEA.

Brother-Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank you with all my heart for the great honour which you have done me by electing me as President of this Congress. An honour, such as this, is all the more gratifying to the recipient when he is reminded of the tenure by which he holds it, viz. the love, the esteem, the confidence of his fellow-countrymen. For us Indians the highest earthly honours, no matter by whom conferred, pale before a distinction which bears upon it the stamp of the approbation and the unstinted confidence of united India. Whether I deserve the honour or not, this I will say that the sanction by which I hold it is the highest, much higher than most sanctions by which authority is exercised here or elsewhere viz. the choice of my fellow-countrymen. Here, if anywhere, there is the right divine for the exercise of authority.

This is the second time that you have summoned me to this great office. When I received your mandate, I obeyed it, but not without hesitation. For however partial I might be to my own merits—and who is not—I could not shut my eyes to the fact that there were many distinguished men who by their great public services and by their still nobler self-abnegation in the national cause have fully established their claims to the honour of the Presidential office. But the choice lay not with me. An expression of your wishes, firmly and authoritatively conveyed to me by those who are entitled to speak in your name and on your behalf, is and has always been to me a command. I overcome my scruples. I bowed to the national will. I appeal to the sympathies of my friends, and I invoked the blessing of Almighty Providence to sanctify our work. And here I am to-day, ready to co-

operate with you and bring to a successful issue the labours of the Eighteenth National Congress.

This is the first time that Congress is held at Ahmedabad. We knew your difficulties, and we admire the dauntless courage with which you faced them and the noble persistency with which you overcame them. Guzerat is but slowly emerging from the throes of one of the greatest calamities of the century. Since 1899 it was in the grip of a famine which, to use the words of the Viceroy, "has been the severest that India has ever known." The story is one of the darkest in Indian history, relieved only by the noble patience and fortitude of the sufferers and the strenuous efforts of the British Government to alleviate their distress. Your difficulties were realized by us, and now that you have overcome them and have held this session of the Congress, which bids fair to be one of the most successful, we applaud the public spirit which has been triumphant over obstacles so formidable and we hasten to offer you the felicitations of all India.

When the Congress was last invited to the Bombay Presidency, it was held at Poona. The capital of the Deccan, Poona is the intellectual centre of the Western Presidency. It is the focus and the starting-point of those forces which have shaped the aspirations and have determined the intellectual and political life of this Presidency. No longer the capital of the Peshwas, it aspires to a higher dominion—it seeks to assert its empire over the hearts and convictions of men. Along with this Sovereignty is associated an honoured name held in universal esteem throughout the length and breadth of this wide—wide continent. Who can speak of Poona or think of it without being reminded of Poona's greatest son, whose loss we all deplore, whose memory we cherish with a pious and reverential affection? The foremost man of his generation, next to Ram Mohon Roy, the mightiest product of English education, the life, character and achievements of Mahadeo Govind Ranade constitute a national heritage, and if it be true, as indeed it is, that great

men never die, he lives with us and amongst us with an immortality which is co-extensive with the life of the race—the inspirer of our noble achievements, our comforter amid distress, he speaks trumpet-tongued from amid the death-like silence of nothingness.

#### THE AHMEDABAD CONGRESS—ITS SPECIAL FEATURES.

The last Congress in the Bombay Presidency was held at Poona, a great intellectual centre. The Congress of this year is held at Ahmedabad, a great industrial centre. Having regard to the recent expansion of our programme, (I will not call it a departure) and to the interlinking in our minds of the industrial and the political movements, it seems to me that there is a special appropriateness in holding the present session of the Congress at Ahmedabad. It is an open declaration that we, the men of the Congress, regard the industrial and the political movements as indissolubly linked together—we hold that they are interdependent and that they act and re-act upon each other and by their mutual interaction swell the volume of both. If we cannot claim to be the originators of the industrial movement, this at any rate may fairly be laid to our credit that we have stimulated those forces and deepened those impulses which have brought it about. When the human mind is roused in one particular direction, the impulse is felt along the entire sphere of human activities. The industrial movement was bound to follow in the wake of the political movement. The industrial precedes or follows the political movement. In England it preceded it. The reform bill of 1832 was the outcome of the enormous expansion of manufacturing industries which was witnessed during the close of the 18th century. In India the order has been different, but here again the intimate relationship between the two movements is illustrated, and the political movement preceding the industrial, we claim that we have communicated the Promethean spark which has vitalized the dying embers of Indian national life in all

its spheres ; we claim that we have fanned them forth into a living flame, full of warmth and brightness and radiance.

The industrial movement is flowing deep, fraught with national ideals. It partakes of the character of the parent movement. It follows in its foot-steps with a truly filial piety. A widespread feeling has been roused in favour of the growth and expansion of indigenous arts and industries, and the distinguished men who organized the Industrial Exhibition in connection with the Calcutta Congress of last year have still further carried their high endeavours by opening a store-house for Indian goods. Our infant industries need protection. But the Government, wedded to the traditions of free trade, will not grant them protection. If, however, protection by legislative enactment is impossible, may we not, by the fiat of the national will, afford them such protection as may lie in our power, if we resolve in our hearts of hearts to avail ourselves, wherever practicable, of indigenous articles in preference to foreign goods. Has not the time come when the scattered national impulses may be focussed into an organic and organized whole for a supreme effort for the promotion of our industries? May we not obtain a complete and comprehensive list of Indian articles available for our varied requirements and seek to encourage their manufacture and stimulate their expansion? I quite agree that the process is expensive. But it is of the essence of protection to incur present pecuniary sacrifice in view of future gain, and our national industries, placed on a sound and satisfactory footing, under a moral protection, evoked by a lofty spirit of patriotism, will, in their own good time, bring in an abundant harvest of gold. All sacrifice, incurred for high national purposes and towards the attainment of great national ideals, is repaid with compound interest. Such is the ordering of nature, the dispensation of Divine Providence ; and the sacrifices we now make to restore our lost industries and to establish new ones will compensate us a hundred-fold by enabling us to supply our own wants and

to check in part at least that depletion of the national wealth which more than anything else has contributed to the appalling poverty of our people. Our industrial helplessness is even more deplorable than our political impotency. And if the Congress can do aught to stimulate the forces which would improve our industrial condition, it would add one more to the many titles which it already possesses to the enduring gratitude of the people of India. Nay more, it would render a great service to the Government. It would relieve the Government, in part at least, of those serious administrative difficulties which have their roots in the deplorably straitened conditions of Indian life. It is therefore with all thankfulness I note that the Industrial Exhibition has come to be regarded as a necessary adjunct to the National Congress. Your Exhibition has been a magnificent success. It has been opened under distinguished auspices by a Prince, whose enlightenment and culture, whose broad and statesmanlike views and deep sympathy with all high endeavours for the public good have not only placed him in the forefront among the Sovereign Princes of India, but have won for him the unstinted homage and admiration of the educated community of India who are proud to reckon him as one of themselves. It must be the heart-felt hope and prayer of every well-wisher of his country that the Industrial Exhibition which was opened by his Highness the Maharaja of Baroda may still further stimulate the industries of this great town and that this session of the Congress may for ever be associated in the minds of the people of Guzerat with a new epoch of industrial development tempered by deep and rational political convictions, prompted by unswerving loyalty to the British connection. Let it never be forgotten that political rights minister to material progress and that an unenfranchised people can never work out their industrial salvation.

#### THE DELHI DURBAR.

The one feeling which is predominant in the breast of

every true Congressman, which shapes and colours his political convictions and might be said to constitute the key-note of his political creed, is love and reverence for his Sovereign and his Country. He loves his Sovereign, because he loves his country and because his Sovereign is the Head of the State and is the embodiment of those constitutional principle, which it is his aim and endeavour and the aspiration of his life to introduce into the government of his own country and which, when recognized as principles of Indian administration, he firmly believes, will conduce to the prosperity of his native land and the permanence of British rule in India. Inspired by this feeling of love and reverence for the Head of the British constitution, our august Sovereign, we heard of His Majesty's illness with profound sorrow—we watched the progress of the disease with the utmost anxiety—and we rejoiced beyond measure on His Majesty's recovery, and from our temples and our mosques and our churches there went forth one great chorus of thanksgiving to the Great Giver of all good, for His abounding mercy in sparing to us our Sovereign, the embodiment of all our hopes and with whose reign are identified the fulfilment of our most cherished aspirations and the redemption of the solemn promises contained in the Queen's Proclamation. The Coronation postponed by His Majesty's illness took place in August last. It was an event of imperial, of world-wide significance. The eyes of the civilized world were fixed upon it as upon an event which proclaimed to the nations of the earth the formal assumption of regal authority by the Sovereign of an Empire whose watchword is freedom and which has extended to the remotest corners of the world the blessing of constitutional liberty. To the people of India the Coronation was an event of unique importance. For the first time in the history of our relations with Britain, a king of England was crowned Emperor of Hindustan. For the first time in the history of our relations with Britain, Indian representatives were present at the Coronation of an English

king, though if the truth is to be told, it must be said that the representation of the educated community was most inadequate. It is proposed to celebrate the Coronation by a great Durbar to be held at Delhi in the course of the next few days. The Durbar has been the subject of animated controversy both here and in England. It has been fiercely assailed by critics whose utterances are entitled to respectful attention. One of them has described it as "an act of uncalled-for extravagance," specially out of place at a time when the country is just emerging from the throes of a great famine, when despite the grateful rains which have done so much to improve the situation, there is still a large number of people who are in receipt of famine-relief and when it is proposed to saddle the Indian revenues with the charge of nearly a million sterling to meet the cost of the efficiency of the reformed British army in India. Of course there are others who have come forward to defend the Durbar. The *Times* has lent to it its thunderous support and has recorded a vigorous protest against the protestants. His Excellency the Viceroy has himself entered the arena; and in a speech conceived in his best style has defended the Durbar and the policy which it embodies. His Excellency has given us the assurance that the ceremonial "will be immeasurably less than the dimensions which a too tropical imagination has allowed it to assume and that a great State ceremonial will never have been conducted in India upon more economical lines." I am not here concerned to defend the possessors of "a too tropical imagination" among whom, be it observed, are several Anglo-Indian Journalists of note, one of whom at least has not lived in the tropics for many a long year. They are well able to defend themselves and have done so. Despite their protests the Durbar will soon be an accomplished fact, and I do not know that it will serve any useful purpose to refer at length to a controversy which has not altered the course of events and now possesses more or less an academic interest. It is fast receding into

the past and will soon vanish out of the domain of contemporary politics. But the rulers of India may learn a lesson and may take a warning from the statesmanship of the past. History has condemned with unequivocal emphasis the Delhi Durbar of 1877 as an expensive pageant of doubtful utility. The time has passed by when a mere pageant, calculated to dazzle and to astonish, can leave an enduring impression upon the public mind of India. Thanks to the educational efforts of our rulers, to the wise, the sagacious and beneficent policy which they have followed, we have long since passed the stage of childhood and have entered upon a period of vigorous adolescence when we are able to discriminate the substance from the shadow. Let no one lay the flattering unction to his soul that the educational movement which has brought about this result is confined to a microscopic minority. The movement is becoming wider and deeper day by day, and while we are foolishly talking of a microscopic minority, the social forces, noiselessly but steadily working in the bosom of society, are developing results which promise to bring the entire community, the classes as well as the masses, within those educational influences which have leavened the upper ranks of the social system. The ideas of the educated few, says John Stuart Mill, are bound to filter downwards and become in the course of time, the ideas of the uneducated many. The process is in vigour operation in India, and let the rulers of the land take note of the fact. A mere pageant will not satisfy public opinion. It will emphasize the complaints that have been made. It is indeed an acceptable feature of the Durbar that there is to be an Industrial Exhibition in connection with it where the products of indigenous arts and industries will be displayed. We are grateful to His Excellency for his interest in the development of our national arts and industries, and we may be permitted to express the hope that it may lead to abiding results. But that is not enough. The Durbar needs to be consecrated by the touch of a higher statesmanship.



It is to be a great historic event, as it is intended to be, it should form a land-mark in our annals—it should be commemorated by some boon which would remind us and our children for all time to come of the occasion and of the principal actors therein. The pomp and glitter of the show, the fine dresses and equipages, even the Oriental magnificence of the scene, set off to the best advantage by the choicest rhetoric which the resources of the English language can supply, will not avail to rescue the Durbar from the corroding influence of time and oblivion. These things will be swept out of view amid the onward rush of events. They will be forgotten ; the historic recollection will retain no trace of them ; but the popular concession which enlarges the sphere of a people's rights and enhances their self-respect or which exalts the purity of the system under which justice is administered and improves its quality, or which once again commemorates the grand old precept that righteousness exalteth a nation will constitute an enduring monument of the ceremonial, worthy of the highest traditions of British statesmanship in India. Such a concession would be in entire accord with precedent and the recognized policy of the British Government on similar occasions. When Her Gracious Majesty the late Queen assumed the direct Government of India, a Durbar was held at Allahabad under the presidency of Lord Canning. A Proclamation was issued at that Durbar—it is the Proclamation of the 1st November 1858, the Magna Charta of our rights, which has been affirmed by successive Viceroys and has been accepted by Lord Curzon as the golden rule of his conduct. It removed all racial disabilities and made merit the sole test of qualification for high office in India. It wiped out the badge of our political inferiority. It declared that whatever might have been the state of things in the days of the East India Company, a new regime had now dawned, and that under the direct Government of the Crown there were to be no inequalities, based upon distinctions of race or creed, and that all British subjects in India were to enjoy equal

rights and possess equal facilities for serving the State. The next ceremonial associated with the Sovereign was the great Durbar of 1877 at which Her late Majesty assumed the title of Empress of India. Lord Lytton presided at that ceremonial, and speaking as the representative of his Sovereign, he once again affirmed the principle of the Proclamation of the 1st November 1858. "But you—the Natives of India" said he, "whatever your race and whatever your creed have a recognized claim to share largely with your English fellow-subjects, according to your capacity for the task, in the administration of the country you inhabit. This claim is founded on the highest justice. It has repeatedly been affirmed by British and Indian statesmen and by the legislation of the Imperial Parliament. It is recognized by the Government of India as binding on its honour and consistent with all the aims of its policy." This authoritative declaration of imperial policy, this solemn reaffirmation of the principle of equal treatment was followed by the creation of the Statutory Civil Service which sought to render partial justice to the claims of the children of the soil for high and responsible office in the service of their own country.

Then came the Jubilee of Her late Majesty. It was celebrated by a great Durbar held in Calcutta in February 1887—just ten years after the Delhi Assemblage. Lord Dufferin presided at that celebration. Speaking as Viceroy and as the exponent of British policy in India, he foreshadowed the great boon which was soon to be bestowed and for which we hold his memory in grateful regard. He said in his Durbar speech:—"Glad and happy should I be, if during my sojourn among them (the people of India) circumstances permitted me to extend and to place upon a wider and more logical footing the political status which was so wisely given a generation ago by that great statesman, Lord Halifax, to such Indian gentlemen as by their influence, their acquirements and the confidence of their fellow-countrymen were marked out as useful adjuncts

to our Legislative Councils." This was said in 1887, and in 1892 the Legislative Councils were enlarged and reconstituted, and for the first time in the history of India were placed upon a partially representative basis.

Thus since the direct assumption of the Government by the Crown, every ceremonial held in connection with the Sovereign and commemorative of her grace has been signalized by a substantial concession to the people. This has been the uniform, the invariable, the traditional policy of the British Government in India for a period of nearly half a century. It is associated with great and illustrious names and has been consistently followed, irrespective of party considerations, whether the Viceroy was Liberal or Conservative. And if one party more than another was pledged to this policy, one might say that it was the Conservative party that was so pledged ; for all these Durbars were held and all these boons were conferred while a Conservative Ministry was in power, as if the great repositories of Conservative traditions wanted to proclaim to the people of India their firm and unalterable conviction that a policy of cautious but continuous progress was essential for the highest purposes of Imperial conservation. Having regard to the traditional policy of the British Government, the people of India look forward with confidence to the bestowal of some boon, the concession of some popular rights, as commemorative of the occasion and of the affectionate interest which His Majesty feels in the welfare of his Indian subjects. To the people of India it would be a grievous disappointment if, on this the first and the greatest ceremonial occasion in connection with the new reign, the traditional policy of the British Government, consecrated by illustrious names and followed with unvarying consistency for nearly half a century, were to be departed from. The traditional policy of the British Government in this matter is in entire keeping with the immemorial usage of the East where royal celebrations, especially those which commemorate the assumption of Sovereign authority,

are proclaimed to the people by beneficent gifts which evoke their gratitude, strengthen their loyalty and secure their attachment to the new Sovereign. It is therefore with all confidence that we would appeal to Lord Curzon to follow precedent and the immemorial usage of the East and convert what, it has been so confidently predicted, would be a mere pageant into a great historical event which will excite the love and reverence of the people, cement their loyalty, draw them closer to Britain and strengthen those ties of attachment between the two countries, upon which the greatness of the British Empire and the prosperity of India alike depend.

#### THE UNIVERSITIES COMMISSION.

Brother-delegates, it is useless to disguise from ourselves the fact that the question which of all others looms largely on the view, which has more or less thrown into the shade all other considerations and before which even the attractions of the Delhi Durbar seem to fade from view—is the question of University Education. The report of the Universities Commission was till lately the one all-absorbing topic of discussion. It excited a measure of interest such as no other public question within living memory has done. I am old enough to remember the controversies of the last quarter of a century. I have in my own humble way been associated with them. My contributions to them were indeed insignificant, but my interest in them was deep and abiding ; and this I will say that I do not remember any proposal, emanating from responsible authority, which has more profoundly stirred the hearts of the Indian community, or has caused deeper alarm, or evoked more strenuous opposition than the report of the Universities Commission. The opposition to the Vernacular Press Act, to the Calcutta Municipal Bill, the Bombay Land Revenue Bill or even the Sedition Bill pales before the agitation which the Report of the Universities Commission gave rise to. There was a sense of alarm, deep, genuine,

all-pervading, felt by all sections of the educated community throughout India, by Hindus and Mussulmans alike. Retired servants of Government, whom the Government delighted to honour, whom they have loaded with titles and distinctions and who have led their quiet lives, away from the storm and stress of political agitation, felt themselves constrained under a sense of overwhelming duty and in response to the general feeling of their community, to emerge from the seclusion of their quiet lives and place themselves in a line with those who condemned the Report. Old men, bent down with the weight of years, the representatives of an older school of thought and culture, the products of our pre-University system, came tottering to the Town Hall meeting to place on record their protest against the recommendations of the Commission. Professional men who had never before spoken at a public meeting and who had never identified themselves with any movement of any kind, but had earned their laurels in the quiet and undisturbed pursuit of their own professions, which were far too remunerative to permit them to think of anything else, for the moment forgot their professions and their profits and joined the general community in the universal protest against the recommendations of the Commission. The Mahomedan community, unhappily for themselves, unhappily for us, have been somewhat backward in our public movements. They have been most forward in condemning the Report. They have promptly disavowed the representative character of the only Mohomedan member of the Commission and denounced him for signing a Report which they rightly believed would be fatal to the educational interests of their community. And if out of evil cometh good, it may truly be said that the Report of the Commission has furthered in an unforeseen and unexpected fashion the general interests of the community, by bringing Hindus and Mahomedans upon the same platform and linking them together by association in a common cause. It has thus helped to promote that solidarity between the two communities which it has ever

been the steadfast aim of the Congress to secure and upon which the interests of both the communities and the prospects of Indian advancement so largely depend. The feeling of alarm was genuine, widespread and universal, and well might it be ; for the noblest gift which British rule has conferred upon India is the boon of high education. It lies at the root of a'l our progress. It is the main-spring, the motive power, the germinal source of all those forces which make for progress. The three great boons which we have received from the British Government are High Education, the gift of a Free Press and Local Self-Government, supplemented by the reform and expansion of the Councils. But high education is the most prized, the most dearly cherished of them all. It is high education which has made Local Self-Government the success that it is admitted to be. It is again high education which has elevated the tone of the Indian Press, has made it a power and has rendered it possible for us to look forward to the time when in the words of Lord Ripon it will become, as in Europe it is, "the irresistible and the unresisted master of the Government." It is English education which has produced a splendid galaxy of distinguished men who have done incalculable service to morals and manners, who have ennobled the literature of their country and have made it a rich vehicle for the expression of the noblest sentiments, of the most abstruse reasonings in philosophy and science and of the varied and complicated requirements of modern life. It is English education which has overcome the barriers of race, religion and language, has dissipated the prejudices and misunderstandings of ages and has created those unifying influences which find a living expression in this vast, this stupendous, this majestic organization of the National Congress. Could the educated community submit to the curtailment of this boon—to the restriction of its beneficent area? They are naturally anxious that nothing should be done to check the spread of that system of education which has produced such

splendid results in the past and which is fraught with infinite possibilities of progress for future generations. English education is a precious boon which has come down to us as a heritage from the past. If we cannot extend and broaden it, it ought at any rate to be our most sacred concern to safeguard it against encroachment and limitation, and so transmit it, with its beneficent area undiminished, to those who coming after us will bear our names. These are the feelings which inspired the agitation, intensified its volume and impressed upon it its distinctive tone and character. In our anxiety we appealed to Lord Curzon. It was united India which preferred its appeal to the Viceroy. Every Province took part in it. Every section of the educated community was represented in it. Whatever differences of opinion may exist with regard to the merits of Lord Curzon's administration—and the time has not yet come for the final judgment—all will agree, even those who see nothing good in it, that His Excellency is keenly responsive to the intimations of public opinion, and we felt convinced that His Excellency would not ignore the public opinion, of educated India, expressed with singular unanimity and unequalled emphasis and upon a question which to them was a question of life and death. In this hope we have not been disappointed. His Excellency has recognized the truth, in the letter of Government to which I shall presently call attention, that no reform can be successful without the sympathetic co-operation of the community concerned, and that any reform forced upon an unwilling community, no matter how promising it might be, no matter how influentially supported it might be, is doomed, foredoomed to failure.

We desire to offer our congratulations to His Excellency, upon his circular letter upon the Report of the Universities Commission. We may not be able to agree with all the suggestions of the Viceroy, but it is a frank and straight-forward recognition of public opinion—it is a praiseworthy attempt at compromise and conciliation; and effective

compromise which ensures steady progress along the line of least resistance and which conciliates and enlists the social forces on behalf of Government, is, to my mind, the highest function of statesmanship. His Excellency has always felt a personal interest in the educational problem. Himself a distinguished University man, His Excellency has told us that the instinct of the educationist is deep down in his nature. The educational problem is one of his twelve chosen problems, and His Excellency has applied himself with characteristic ardour to its solution. So far back as the summer of 1901 a conference was held at Simla to which some European educational experts were invited. The proceedings of that Conference have not been published. I fail to understand why they should be withheld from publication. If there is one class of considerations more than another in regard to which the public should be taken into confidence, it is those which relate to the problem of Education. Here if anywhere, popular sympathy and co-operation is necessary. No useful purpose is served by investing educational problems with a quasi-political character and raising them to the dignity of State-secrets. A suspicious public, barred out of the confidence of the authorities, naturally interpret their proceedings in their own way and ascribe to them a sense and a significance which they perhaps will not bear, and thus between them and the Government there arises a misunderstanding when their mutual sympathy and co-operation is needed for the satisfactory solution of the educational problem. I can quote no higher authority against this policy of concealment in educational matters than that of His Excellency the Viceroy. Thus did His Excellency denounce the policy of secrecy, in educational matters at the Conference whose proceedings have been withheld from publication:—"Concealment has been no part of my policy since I have been in India and the education of the people is assuredly the last subject to which I should think of applying any such canon."



## THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNIVERSITIES COMMISSION.

The conference was followed by the appointment in January 1902 of the Universities Commission. The Commission was appointed "to enquire into the condition and prospects of the Universities established in British India; to consider and report upon any proposals which have been or may be, made for improving their constitution and working, and to recommend to the Governor-General in Council such measures as may tend to elevate the standard of University teaching, and to promote the advancement of learning." The report of the Commission has long been before the public; and the views of the Government thereon have recently been published. His Excellency the Viceroy, while according a general support to the Report of the Commission, has not been able to accept all its conclusions. If there is one quality more than another which distinguishes the Viceroy, it is that he is the keeper of his own conscience, that he does not surrender his judgment or his convictions to the authority of names, however distinguished. I am bound to say that the constitution of the Commission was such, its method of procedure was such, that it was impossible that its recommendations could command the general approval of the public or the unqualified assent of the Government.

The Commission originally consisted of six members, with the Hon'ble Mr. Raleigh, Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University, as president. Not a single representative of the great Hindu community who had the largest stake in the educational problems under consideration was included among the Commissioners as originally nominated. Let us however thankfully note that when attention was called to this omission in the columns of the public prints, His Excellency was graciously pleased to nominate the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Gooroo Dass Bannerjee as a member of the Commission. The appointment of Mr.

Justice Bannerjea was received with universal approbation. One of the most brilliant graduates of the Calcutta University, he has long been honourably associated with the work of the University. He was twice appointed Vice-Chancellor of the University, and he was among the most distinguished of our Vice-Chancellors, regarding his office not as an ornamental adjunct to the high position which he held, but a new field of activity and usefulness, and setting an example of unflinching devotion to duty and of statesman-like concern in the interests of the University, of which he was so fine a product. Who will say that the Calcutta University has been a failure or has not fulfilled the high ends of its existence when it has produced men like Mr. Justice Gooroo Dass Bannerjea? The Commission, as now constituted, consisted of seven members, of whom five were officials, the sixth was a missionary gentleman, and the last but not the least was the Mahomedan member of the Viceroy's Council, whose experience of educational matters is confined to the Nizam's Dominions. His representative character has been disavowed by his community, and he has been described by my friend the Hon'ble Mr. Mehta and his colleagues of the Bombay Presidency Association in their memorial to the Viceroy as being disqualified to represent the views and feelings of the educated community, by reason of the avowedly hostile attitude he has taken towards them in his public writings and speeches.

#### A CONTRAST BETWEEN THE EDUCATION COMMISSION OF 1882 AND THE UNIVERSITIES

##### COMMISSION OF 1902.

In our Presidency, private effort covers a large area of the field of education. The total number of Colleges affiliated to the Calcutta University is 78. Out of these, as many as 59 are Private Unaided Colleges, which were founded and are now maintained by Indian gentlemen.

It is unfortunate that the interests of the unaided colleges were not represented on the Commission ; and the omission is all the more regrettable in view of the recommendations of the Commission, some of which so seriously affect their position and status. The Government educational interest and those of the missionary bodies were represented on the Commission but not those of the unaided colleges. The conclusion is forced upon us that the constitution of the Commission was defective, and this view is emphasized by a reference to the *personnel* of the Education Commission of 1882. On that Commission, to use the words of Mr. Buckland, Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, were "departmental and executive officers of Government and representatives of the educated community of each province (except Burma to which the enquiry was not extended)" (Buckland's Bengal under the Lieutenant-Governors, Vol. II, Page 766).

No such principle has been followed in determining the constitution of the Universities Commission ; and yet it must be admitted that if the representatives of the educated community were qualified to advise the Government in framing its educational policy in 1882, they must be presumed to be far more qualified for the task in 1902. To hold otherwise would be to assume that in the twenty years which have since elapsed, the educated community have retrograded, despite the earnest efforts of the Government to stimulate their progress. Such an astounding assumption has not been made even by our worst detractors. We are justified therefore in holding that the non-inclusion of provincial representatives of that community among the members of the Universities Commission was a departure from the policy followed by the Government of India in 1882, and it was a departure which, I have no hesitation in saying, is largely responsible for a Report which has caused so much stir and dissatisfaction. I will even go further and add that the policy followed in this case is in entire conflict with the

principle laid down by His Excellency the Viceroy in the constitution of Commissions and Committees appointed by the Government. Referring to the difficulties attending the constitution of Indian Commissions, His Excellency in his Budget-speech of March last observed :—"There is the reference to be drawn up, involving long and anxious study, the Secretary of State to be consulted, the consent of his Council obtained, the members to be selected by a careful balance of the interests, and merits, not merely of individuals, but of provinces, races and even of creeds." Where, may I ask, was the careful balancing of interests in the constitution of the Universities Commission, not only as regards individuals, but also as regards provinces, races and creeds? I am well aware that at each University centre a local member was attached to the Commission for the purpose of the enquiry at that centre. But these gentlemen did not sign the Report, and as the Commissioners themselves say, "they are in no way responsible for the substance of the Report."

Nor is this the only point of difference between the two Commission—the Education Commission of 1882 and the Universities Commission of 1902. The care and deliberation which the Education Commission brought to bear upon their task are in striking contrast with the hurry, and I was going to add, the precipitancy with which the Universities Commission finished their work. The Universities Commission was constituted on the 27 January 1902; Dr. Gooroo Dass Bannerjea's name was added on the 12th February, so that we may fairly assume, that, barring perhaps the settlement of preliminaries, no work had been done till the 12th February, and the Report was submitted on the 9th June. Thus the work of "enquiry into the condition and prospects of the Universities established in British India (of which there are five), the consideration of proposals for improving their constitution and working and the recommendations calculated to elevate the standard of University-teaching and promote the advancement of learning" were all finished in four month's time!

Now contrast this hurried work with the prolonged and careful enquiry of the Education Commission. The Commission was appointed in February 1882. They submitted their Report in September 1883. They took nearly eighteen months to finish their work. The Universities Commission submitted their Report in less than one-fourth the time taken up by the Education Commission. There is yet another point of comparison which cannot escape observation. The Education Commission, like most other Commissions, drew up questions which had been carefully thought out, and which were sent to the witnesses for them to consider and draw up their answers. The Universities Commission did no such thing. No questions were drawn up by them, but in Bengal a Note was circulated (and I presume the same procedure was followed elsewhere) calling attention to the points upon which the witnesses were to be interrogated and it is remarkable that in the Bengal Note not the smallest reference was made to some of the proposals which gave rise to so much controversy, such as for instance the abolition of the Second Grade Colleges and the Law Classes; and not one of the witnesses, so far as I am aware, was asked to give an opinion regarding these proposals. Here again I must confess to a sense of disappointment that the evidence of the witnesses who were examined before the Commission has not yet been published. The public ought surely to know whether the drastic recommendations of the Commission are supported by evidence, and if so, what the nature of the evidence is. Nothing is gained by secrecy in a matter of this kind. Trust begets trusts, and great as are the difficulties which surround the educational problem, they are aggravated by a policy of half-confidence which is apt to create suspicion and mistrust. I am not one of those who believe that any sinister political motive lies veiled behind the Report of the Commission. I do not regard the Report as a political manifesto in an academic guise; but I am bound to say that if any such feeling is entertained in any quarter,

the hesitating policy of half-trust and half-mistrust is mainly responsible for it. Liberalism has been defined by Mr. Gladstone as trust in the people tempered by discretion. I am afraid the policy followed in this case must be described as one of mistrust, tempered by discretion. I rejoice to find that the letter of Government on the Report of the Commission sounds a different note. Here a genuine attempt is made to take the public into confidence.

#### THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSION.

In approaching the consideration of the Report of the Commission it will at once be conceded that the University system in India is not perfect, any more than any other human institution is ; and a cautious and well-devised scheme of reform, calculated to promote the advancement of learning without interfering with the spread of high education, would be welcomed by the educated community ; for they realize the truth that their future progress largely depends upon a sound system of education which would qualify them for the hard and increasingly difficult competition of modern life. As His Highness the Gaikwar of Baroda has observed with great truth in his admirable article in 'East and West,' education will be the watchword of the twentieth century and the diffusion of education, the great object upon which will be concentrated the energies and the statesmanship of the century. Could we persuade ourselves to believe that the recommendations of the Commission would secure the advancement of learning without restricting its area and that it would combine height with surface, there would go forth a mighty voice from educated India, supporting the Report of the Commission and offering to the Commissioners our cordial congratulations. But the Commissioners themselves admit—and the scope of their Report leaves no doubt on the subject—that the effect of their proposals would be to narrow the popular basis of higher education and to restrict its area. It is against the policy and the recommendations

which lead to it that we desire to record our respectful but emphatic protest. We cannot accept a policy which would deprive our great middle class who are far from being well off, from whom come our intellectual classes who, with their keen hereditary instincts, have from time immemorial furnished the intellectual leaders of the community, to be deprived of some of those opportunities of high education which they now enjoy. The recommendations of the Commission which embody this policy may be summarised as follows :—

(1) The fixing of a minimum rate of College-fees by the Syndicate ; (2) the abolition of the Second Grade Colleges and (3) the abolition of the Law Classes.

All these proposals involve the direct discouragement of private effort which has done so much to stimulate the spread of high English education, and they are in entire conflict with the educational policy of the past. That policy is embodied in the great Education Despatch of 1854 which has been followed with unvarying consistency by the Government of India for the last fifty years. The cardinal features of that policy may be described as the extension of "the means of acquiring general European knowledge" and the encouragement of private effort by a system of grants-in-aid, wherever necessary. Let us here gratefully acknowledge that the Government of India in their circular letter on the Report of the Universities Commission emphatically disclaim any intention of receding from the policy of 1854 ; and as a necessary corollary they do not support some of the proposals of the Commission which must seriously impede the sustained movement of private effort. The Government recognize that the Second Grade Colleges occupy a definite place in our educational machinery and perform useful functions. Again in the matter of legal education, the Government claim no monopoly, though they are inclined to support the establishment of a Central College at each University centre which would serve as a model. Both as regards the

the Law Classes and the Second Grade Colleges, so long as efficiency is maintained the Government of India are not inclined to interfere with them. Thus in regard to two very important questions which elicited the unanimous protest of of the educated community, the Government of India make a definite concession to popular opinion, for which we are truly grateful. The Government indeed declare their firm adhesion to the policy of the Education Despatch in regard to the encouragement of private effort but object to the qualification that "the sole condition upon which private enterprise can be encouraged is that the education which it offers is reasonably efficient." Evidently the Government of India are of opinion that the time has come when private effort should be restrained rather than stimulated, its exuberance should be pruned down rather than that it should be encouraged to shoot forth into a vigorous growth. Far different was the spirit in which the Government of India approached the consideration of this question in 1882. They depreciated any uniform system of education which would, in their felicitous language, "cast the youth of the country in the same official mould" and they went on to observe that "it is not in the opinion of the Governor-General in Council, a healthy symptom that all the youth of the country should be cast as it were in the same official mould \* \* \*. The Government is ready, therefore, to do all that it can to foster such a spirit of independence and self-help. It is willing to hand over any of its own colleges and schools in suitable cases to bodies of native gentlemen who will undertake to manage them satisfactorily as aided institutions. All that the Government will insist upon being that provision is made for efficient management and extended usefulness." It will be seen that the method of enunciation of the same policy is substantially different, and the spirit is different. While in 1882, the Government was anxious to do all that it could to foster a spirit of independence and self-help, in 1902 it lays special stress upon the need of restraining the efforts of



private enterprise. In 1882, the Government did not ignore considerations of efficiency ; in 1902 it dwells upon them with great emphasis. We are at one with the Government in insisting upon a standard of efficiency. But it should not be of the ideal order. It should be fixed with reference to the circumstances of a people who are notoriously poor. The Government indeed recognize the fact "that the standard of efficiency which it is proper and possible to enforce in India is admittedly not so high as that which is attained in more advanced countries."

Public opinion will support the Government in all reasonable efforts to check the growth of institutions which are both cheap and worthless ; but do not the results of the University examinations afford a good test of efficiency, and is there not the self-acting principle, inexorable in its operation, that things nasty and cheap must disappear from a world where the survival of the fittest is the universal law? The process may be slow, but it is sure, and moving as it does along the line of least resistance, it is attended with the minimum of disturbance. There seems to be an idea in official quarters that the aided, and in a still larger measure, the unaided colleges are not as efficient as they might be. But what about the Government Colleges? Are they always models of excellence and efficiency? Do we not occasionally hear in connection with them of serious breaches of discipline and of drastic measures enforced to ensure respect for authority? If there is to be a standard of efficiency, let it be of uniform application, and not judged solely by reference to external appliances, such as libraries and laboratories, but by the larger, though perhaps more palpable moral results, which, it is the aim and the end of all education to secure. The efficiency of the affiliated Colleges is tested by the annual examinations of the University. It is to their interest that their students should be successful and occupy high places at the examinations. They have thus to study efficiency from the point of view of self-interest,

and efficiency is best ensured when it is associated with a motive which so powerfully appeals to our strongest impulses.

I may say that I attach considerable importance to the University Examinations as a test of efficiency. They are now practically the sole test upon which the Universities rely. They were deemed sufficient by the founders of the Universities and those who inheriting their traditions worked upon their lines. Are they not an exceedingly efficient test, if the examinations are properly conducted and suitable question papers are set ? If the tests which are now applied were tests of general intellectual capacity rather than of memory, then we should hear less of the inefficiency of our Universities. But the general impression is that the examination papers are not what they should be ; and no one has been more eloquent or more incisive in their denunciation than His Excellency the Viceroy. Yet through the whole of the Report of the Universities Commission we look in vain for a single suggestion or a single definite recommendation, by which the system of University Examinations might be improved.

#### THE RATE OF COLLEGE-FEES.

It is considerations of efficiency which have determined the attitude of the Government in regard to the question of College-fees. On this question the Government are apparently inclined to support the recommendation of the Commission. Efficiency, they say, is difficult to measure, its estimation is open to dispute, and the principle that with a fee-scale below a certain limit, efficiency in a College without considerable endowments or subscriptions is impossible is one for which there is much to be said. But if that scale is so fixed as to substantially reduce the number of students, the increase in the rate of fees would defeat its object and diminish the total receipts of the College from that source. Further, the raising of the fees would throw difficulties in the way of the higher education of the deserving poor. The

diffusion of education among the people, including the deserving poor, has been the steadfast concern of Governments in the past. This policy has received the sanction of the high authority of His Excellency the Viceroy. "Care must be taken," said the Government of India in the Resolution on the Report of the Education Commission of 1882, "that no unnecessary obstacles are thrown in the way of the upward progress of really deserving students of the poorer classes. The Governor-General in Council has no wish to close the doors of high education to all but the wealthiest members of the native community." His Excellency Lord Curzon emphatically endorses this policy and says in the letter of Government that nothing can be further from the wishes of the Government of India than "to initiate a policy which would make education the monopoly of the rich." But if heavy fees are levied, higher education must necessarily become the privilege of the few. If the fees are now adequate, any addition to them would operate in the nature of a restriction imposed upon the proper sections of the community who supply the bulk of our students. The whole problem therefore resolves itself into this—is the present scale of fees adequate or not? The question was carefully considered by the Education Commission of 1882, and they were of opinion that the rates then levied were generally adequate, regard being had to the fact that the majority of the College students belong to the struggling middle class. They did not indeed write without chapter and verse; for they observed:—"The great landed proprietors are scarcely, if at all, represented (in our Colleges). In Bengal the income of more than half the parents is assessed at sums varying from £20 to £200 a year." If the College-fees were adequate in 1882, having regard to the then condition of the middle class they cannot now be considered as being inadequate or insufficiently low. The condition of the middle class has not improved, while the prices of provisions and of the necessary articles of life have risen. If anything, the

condition of the middle class has become worse. They are for the most part either lawyers or servants of the Government. The salaries of Government Servants are fixed, and the Indian servants of Government receive no exchange compensation allowance. The income of lawyers in 1902 is, I am afraid, much less than what it was in 1882. There is thus no reason to assume that the fees paid in 1902 which are slightly higher than those paid in 1882 are insufficient or inadequately low, and if not, any attempt to raise them must necessarily restrict the area of high education. There is indeed an upward trend in the direction of fees, and the movement may be left to itself without the stimulus of external pressure. Scholarships and endowments may indeed keep the poorer students. But Scholarships must be available only to a few of the deserving poor, and they will also be open to the deserving rich.

And where are the private endowments in aid of education ? Nature is not rich in her choicest productions ; and a Tata and a Carnegie and a Wadia who divests himself of his all for the benefit of mankind, are as rare as they are the noblest types of their race. I very much fear endowments would not be forthcoming for educational purposes, unless a movement in their favour were started under such distinguished auspices as have crowned the Victoria Memorial and the Lady Dufferin Fund with success.

Educated opinion is in entire accord with Dr. Gooroo Dass Bannerjea's view of the question, viz., "that the minimum rate of College fees should be left to adjust itself according to the circumstances of each province and the Universities should not interfere in determining it unless there are very strong reasons for doing so." We are naturally anxious that nothing should be done to interfere with the diffusion of high education among the great middle class community. The noblest products of English education have all come from this class, the deserving poor if you like. Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Mahadeo Govind Ranade, Kristo Das Pal,

Dadabhai Naoroji, and others too numerous to be mentioned here, were all sprung from the middle class. Their education made them the benefactors of their country. They were an honour to the educational system under which they were brought up. Are the doors of high education to be closed against men of this class by the imposition of prohibitive fees? As the 'Statesman' newspaper which has done yeoman's service in this controversy and to which the grateful acknowledgments of the Indian community are due, says with great force "If a certain standard of efficiency is insisted on, what need is there for the Government to go behind that condition and concern itself about the cost and the way in which it is defrayed." We trust that His Excellency the Viceroy, whose attitude throughout this controversy, has been so eminently conciliatory, will be graciously pleased to accept the views of Mr. Justice Bannerjea, who, by reason of his knowledge of local condition and intimate touch with the middle-class, of which he is so bright an ornament, was really far more competent to advice the Government on this matter than any other member of the Commission. I can only express my surprise that Mr. Syed Hossain Belgrami should not have associated himself with Mr. Justice Bannerjea in this part of his note of dissent, for the community from which he comes is far less able than almost any other community in India to pay a high rate of fees. The replies given by the Secretary of State to the questions put by Mr. Caine in the House of Commons will have a re-assuring effect on the public mind, for Lord George Hamilton said that he had no doubt that the interests of the poorer students would not be ignored by the Government.

How efficiency is best secured. Efficiency is the keynote of the letter of Government. We should be false to ourselves if we did not cordially co-operate with the Government in securing the efficiency of our educational institutions, consistently with the pecuniary circumstances of our people and the diffusion of high education. But it seems to me

that no great forward stride towards educational efficiency is possible without a distinct improvement in the efficiency of the professoriate. "What is vital for the highest function of a University" says Mr. Sidney Webb, "is the professoriate and its environment." The late Dr. Thring, one of the greatest educationists that England has produced, remarked (and the remark is quoted with approbation by His Excellency the Viceroy) "that education is the transmission of life from the living, through the living, to the living." But I am afraid that in many cases the professors here have no life to communicate, no generous impulse, no noble enthusiasm, no soul-stirring ardour for truth and freedom to impart to those who sit at their feet and derive from them the pulsations of their intellectual and moral life. Is there a nobler profession than that of the teacher? To them are entrusted the destinies of youth. They are the up-builders and the architects of the future. They make or mar the fortunes of a country. But how many teachers are there among us who realize their grave responsibilities or rise to the height of their truly divine mission? Raise the status of the teacher—dignify and elevate his calling—draw to the professoriate of the countrymen who will embrace it, not as a mere bread-earning profession, but a high calling, a heaven-appointed task, a self-dedication to a sacred purpose, and you will not need Commissions and Committees, Report and Resolutions to secure the efficiency of our Universities and the advancement of learning. The names of great teachers form landmarks in the educational history of this country.

They have done more for the cause of education than all the Resolutions, all the Regulations, all the fine maxims and even all the pious aspirations which have emanated from responsible authority. D'Rozario, the Eurasian youth, who fired with apostolic fervour communicated a new-life and a strange impulse to the youth of Bengal in the early days of British rule; Peary Churn Sircar who loved his students almost as dearly as he loved his children; Ramtanu

Lahiri, and in a lesser sense, Rajnarain Bose, who led them onwards and upwards to a higher and diviner life, have rendered a service to the cause of learning and of morals which will be remembered as long as the history of English education in India is treasured up in our minds.

In Bombay, you had your great Dr. Wordsworth and Sir Alexander Grant; in other Presidencies there are familiar names. We want men like them to leaven the professoriate and the cause of education and the advancement of learning will be secured. But the Report, and, I regret to say, the letter of Government are silent about this most important consideration. Not even the semblance of a suggestion is thrown out for the improvement of the professoriate, without which educational efficiency would be all but unattainable. For this purpose the improvement of the status of the Educational Service is necessary; and no where is such improvement more urgently required than in the Subordinate branches of the Service, where the pay is small and the duties grave and responsible. For purposes of efficiency I maintain that the diffusion of education is necessary, for an appropriate environment must be created. Height is only possible where the foundations are broad and deep, suitable to the noble edifice that is sought to be raised thereon. Advancement of learning is best secured and under conditions which guarantee permanence where the general culture of the community is maintained on a high level. A cultured public opinion, sustaining and stimulating the advancement of learning, is a more effective ally of knowledge than all the artificial pressure which the most enlightened Government, aided by the resources of unlimited power, may exert. But the formation of such opinion presupposes the wide diffusion of knowledge. Let there be efficiency, but let it never be forgotten that efficiency involves, not the restriction, but the expansion of the educational area—it is a double movement, combining height with surface.

Writing on the lines on which the London University should be organized, Mr. Sidney Webb, a high educational authority to whom I have already referred, thus comments on the importance of the spread of education among the general community :—

Being as regards its under-graduate class, essentially a University for the sons and daughters of households of limited means and strenuous lives, it will not, like Oxford and Cambridge, set itself to skim from the surface of society the topmost layer of rich men's sons and scholarship winners. Wisely organised and adequately endowed, it must dive deep down through every stratum of its seven millions of constituents, selecting by the tests of personal ambition and endurance, of talent and "grit," for all the brain-working professions and for scientific research, every capable recruit that London rears. Hence it must stand ready to enrol in its under-graduate ranks not hundreds a year but thousands. If we remember that Paris and Berlin drawing from much smaller local populations and exposed each to the competition of a score of other Universities in their own countries have each actually twelve thousand University students, we can see that any equally effective London University might easily number twenty thousand.

#### CRAM.

I am in strong sympathy with those who wish to discourage cram. I do not indeed believe that little learning is a dangerous thing. To me it seems that it is much more dangerous to the community that the rulers of men should be the victim of such a mischievous hallucination. Little learning is certainly better than no learning, as well-digested knowledge which strengthens the judgment and invigorates the understanding is infinitely preferable to the ill-assimilated stuff which is not incorporated into the intellectual system, and does not strengthen its fibre or enrich its texture. In the discipline of the mind, the cultivation of the memory is of course not to be neglected. The memory is the hand-maid of the understanding and often supplies to it the materials upon which its pronouncements are based. But the understanding is the sovereign faculty in the intellectual system, and it should not be sacrificed for the sake of a



subordinate power. But how is cram to be discouraged and the understanding strengthened? I regret to have to say that the Report of the Universities Commission supplies no answer to the question. It is the multiplicity of books and the multiplicity of subjects which produce a bewildering confusion and tempt the student to rely upon his memory rather than upon his understanding. He must anyhow pass the examination. The subjects and the books are too many and the time is too short to permit him to master them and to assimilate into his intellectual system the food which they supply. If the subjects and books are fewer, he would have leisure for careful study, and would reap those great intellectual benefits which careful study confers. As it is, he races through his books and subjects at railway speed—and like the carrier, glad to be relieved of his burden, he flings them away as soon as the destined goal of the examination is reached, rejoicing that he has at last obtained his release, vowing that he will not come within a measurable distance of the examination hall, or of his books or his studies, if he can possibly help it. To anticipate that under such a system there could grow that generous enthusiasm for knowledge, that craving for learning for learning's sake, which it is the object of all education to foster and promote is to indulge in the wildest dream. Often under the strain, the unhappy student breaks down, physically and mentally—a complete wreck in every sense of the term. What is to be the remedy? Reduce the number of books; reduce the number of subjects; give more breathing-time to the teacher and the taught; let them rejoice in the company of the celestials of the earth; let the company of the celestials be to them a pleasure and not an infliction; let them drink deep their spirit, and the sovereign remedy against cram will have been found and the highest ends of education served.

But the Commission, instead of reducing the already heavy burden on the student, proposes a sensible addition by recommending an additional subject for the B. A. Exam-

ination of the Calcutta University. In the Calcutta University it was after a hard fight that the number of subjects for the B. A. Examination was reduced from four to three by the almost unanimous vote of the Senate. A Teacher's Conference which recently sat in Calcutta unanimously protested against the proposed increase in the number of subjects for the B. A. Examination. There is too great a disposition in some quarters to forget that a wide area of surface in academic instruction often involves a sacrifice of depth. The practical teacher is confronted with this difficulty every moment of his life, but the doctrinaire, safe in his ignorance, is apt to overlook a consideration, so simple and yet so imperative. And here I must be permitted to deprecate the application of the same hard-and-fast system to all the Indian Universities, such as the University Commission apparently contemplates. It is very obvious that a uniform system applied to a whole continent, to populations in varying stages of progress and separated by wide differences in condition and circumstances, in intellectual capacity and aspirations, must end in failure. The Commission seemed to have ignored this obvious consideration and have framed a scheme of educational reform, which takes no cognizance of local needs and circumstances and the widely divergent conditions which prevail in the different provinces of India. Surely the question as to what should be the right curriculum for the B. A. Degree Examination in the different Universities is a matter which might be left to the Universities themselves to decide and to determine.

Mr. Syed Hossein Belgrami has signed the Report, but another Mr. Belgrami, (Mr. Syed Ali Belgrami) makes the very complaint which I have here ventured to urge. Mr. Belgrami institutes a comparison between the courses of study in the English Universities and those of the Universities here. He finds that from the Entrance Examination to the end of his course, the student in India has to study more subjects than the English student. Not only has the English

student to pass in a smaller range of subjects to enter a University ; but after he passes he is allowed to specialise, and if the English University has an intermediate examination it is rather designed to serve as a guide to his special aptitude, as a preparation for his pass examination than as a test for his general knowledge. As the Pioneer observes the Indian student has to spend his time and industry over many subjects and in the words of Seneca he learns merely to speak with others and not with himself. Despite these facts we are told that our degrees are cheap, and that educated India is interested in keeping them cheap. Never was a more unfounded calumny uttered, and the marvel is that it should have been given currency to by so well-informed and so responsible an organ of public opinion as the Times newspaper.

#### THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH.

The Commission attaches considerable importance to the teaching of English. Considering that English is to us the key to the learning and culture of the West, I may say that I am in sympathy with this view. But it must be observed that the methods suggested by the Commission admit of considerable differences of opinion. They are (1) that candidates must obtain forty per cent. of the marks for English in order to pass the Entrance Examination, (2) that it is undesirable that text books should be prescribed in English at the Entrance Examination. As regards the first of these recommendations, I am well aware that it has been unanimously recommended by a committee of the Calcutta University, consisting of distinguished educational experts whose views are entitled to the highest respect. Will it raise the standard of knowledge of English, possessed by candidates for the Matriculation generally ? It will certainly reduce the number and percentage of successful candidates, but it will not raise the knowledge of English of the candidates generally. That must depend upon the teaching and upon the general efficiency of our schools. Here again the

supreme importance of an efficient tutorial and professorial staff forces itself upon the attention.

As regards the proposal for the abolition of text-books for the Entrance Examination, I understand there are no text-books for the Matriculation at Madras and Bombay. It seems to me that the best means of teaching English at the stage of progress at which the candidate has arrived when he prepares himself for the Entrance Examination is to prescribe for him suitable text-books. They should be limited in their number and he should be well-grounded in them. He should have time to read them over and over again, so that he may be in a position to master the vocabulary, the idioms, the grammar and lessons which may abound in his text-books. To leave him without text-books at this stage of his progress is to leave him without rudder and compass—it is to leave him to the unknown and unknowable chapter of accident in the arduous task to master one of the most difficult languages in the world. The question set at the examination need not be confined to the text-book. They should be a test, not of memory, but of his real knowledge of the language.

#### TEACHING UNIVERSITIES.

The Commission, in the opening words of their summary of recommendations, say :—The legal powers of the older Universities should be enlarged so that all the Universities may be organized as teaching bodies. The Commissioners devote a few paragraphs of their Report to the consideration of the question of Teaching Universities. They recommend “that the Universities may justify their existence as teaching bodies by making further and better provision for advanced courses of study.” They suggest that the Universities should appoint their lecturers and provide libraries and laboratories, the Colleges being required to contribute, by means of scholarships or otherwise, to the maintenance of those students who take advantage of the University courses. One of the advantages of this plan, says the Report, is that it

can be worked out gradually and without the great initial expense which the creation of a complete professoriate would involve.

I fail to understand why the Government should not take the entire responsibility of maintaining at each University centre central school of advanced study, which would draw to it the best graduates of the University, animated by a thirst of knowledge and eager for the pursuit of more advanced courses of study. Such a central school would stimulate the pursuit of higher knowledge and exercise a healthy influence upon our educational system. There is no reason why the Presidency College in Calcutta should not at once be converted into a University College of this kind dealing exclusively with post-graduate courses of study. The State is deeply interested in the higher education of the Community, and the State must find the means for providing facilities for such education. The Tokio University, maintained by the Japanese Government, is a teaching University. Surely the British Indian Government is not going to proclaim to the world that it is unequal to the educational responsibilities which the Japanese Government has assumed. The question is one of finance, but when our Government is as rich as the richest in the world in the readiness with which it adds to the military expenditure of Empire, we have a right to expect at least an equal measure of generosity in dealing with a problem which so intimately affects the happiness and the progress of the people. The Government in its letter on the Report of the Universities Commission recognises the fact that the whole question of University reform is one of finance; and the foremost of these reforms, for which no expense should be grudged, is that which relates to the provision for University teaching for the higher courses of knowledge. Here indeed is a splendid field for private liberality; but a Government must set the example, and private liberality, in this country at any

rate, flows with added impetus under the fostering care of Government.

### THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNIVERSITIES.

There is no part of the Report of the Universities Commission which has elicited a stronger protest or evoked more wide spread dissent than that which deals with the constitution of the Universities. The cry has been raised—and there is abundant justification for it—that if the recommendations of the Commission in this respect were to be accepted, the Universities would be reduced to so many Departments of the State. A correspondent writing to the Times from India (and the Times gave a special prominence to his letter) says that a popularly controlled University is anomalous and impracticable and State-control can alone ensure efficiency; and he has the hardihood to assure the British Public that the tentative policy of placing the Universities, under more or less popular control, has nowhere given satisfaction and has in many instances led to results which may be described as scandalous. A more malignant libel has never been uttered against our Universities. I am not here to defend the Universities, but we should like to have chapter and verse. We should like to have a categorical enumeration of the alleged scandals which the present system has given rise to. Let the indictment be framed—if indeed it can be framed—and we shall know how to meet it. In the meantime, I will take leave to record my personal protest against the condemnation of our Universities by an appeal to calumnies which will not stand a moment's scrutiny. But whatever the irresponsible writer, in the Times may say and whatever support the Times may accord to him, it is very evident that His Excellency the Viceroy attaches considerable importance to the public protest which this part of the Report has elicited. His Excellency does not apparently accept the proposal of the Commission that the Director of Public Instruction should be ex-officio Vice-

chairman of the Syndicate. The Senate will continue to be the final authority in the matter of the recognition of schools. The elective principle will be definitely recognized in the constitution of the Senate. May we not appeal to His Excellency to continue and broaden the policy of the past and till further popularize the University by providing that at least one-half of the members of the Senate should be elected by the graduates of the University of a certain standing. The graduates have a permanent and an affectionate interest in their Universities, and in all that conduces to their credit and reputation. Their participation in the affairs of their Universities would inspire them with a sense of responsibility and would enlist on behalf of educational reforms the sympathy and support of the educated community.

There is no desire on the part of any one to divest the Universities of State-control. Such control, however, should be in the nature of general supervision, rather than of direct and active participation in the every-day work of University. The letter of the Government of India embodying their suggestions has been circulated among the Provincial Governments for their opinions. I have no doubt that the Universities and the various recognized Associations of the country will be consulted. The educated community throughout India will watch the further progress of this controversy with the keenest interest. To them the issues raised are of supreme importance. The whole of their future might be said to be at stake. Are they to have their present educational system strengthened, invigorated and adopted to modern requirement, combining height with surface, the steady expansion of the educational area with the gradual advancement of learning or are they to have an emasculated system, shorn of the principle of growth and expansion, confined to an infinitesimal section of the people, without influence on the life of the community and without power to mould it for the highest purposes of human progress? We have made our choice—we have proclaimed it with all

the emphasis that we could command—and the latest official pronouncement seems to convey the assurance that the sympathies of the Government of India are with us.

#### THE ECONOMIC PROBLEM.

Next in importance to the educational problem is the question of the economic condition of the people. The educational problem does not usually occupy a large place in our discussions in this Congress. Not that its importance is overlooked, but we are content to rely with implicit confidence upon the slow and steady expansion of those educational efforts which have never been interrupted and which form a permanent feature of British policy in India. Circumstances, to which I have already referred, have given to the educational problem the prominence which it now possesses. But the statesmanlike attitude of the Viceroy gives us the assurance that the grave issues which have been raised will be settled ere long, and they will be settled in a manner which will reconcile conflicting schools and divergent interests and ensure the diffusion as well as the advancement of learning. The economic problem is a more contentious one and affords ground for wider difference of opinion, coloured, I am afraid, by official and party bias. Here we enter upon an altogether more difficult sphere, where the atmosphere is surcharged with the heat of partisan controversy and where the combatants have already taken up definite sides, to which they are attracted by interests and passions which must seriously interfere with the impartial consideration of the problem. On the one hand, we have the Government and the adherents of the Government, who, jubilant over the fat surpluses of the last few years, inviting an admiring world to congratulate them on their work. On the other, we have Mr. Digby and his friends who shake their heads in stolid incredulity and producing their facts and figures from official sources, challenge the optimism of the opposite school. They maintain, not upon "a plausible syllogistic formula"



(whatever that may mean), but upon data supplied by official authority, that India undergone steady material retrogression under British rule, and they appeal to the Secretary of State for "a searching examination" of their position.

Your President is not called upon to act as an arbiter in this controversy. He does not indeed feel himself qualified for the task. He has responsibilities sufficiently grave to think of adding one more to them. But the controversy is one in which this Congress must feel the deepest interest. Is it the case—we ask—that the country is getting poorer day by day? The question is so momentous that Lord George Hamilton was forced to admit that if it should be answered in the affirmative, British rule must stand self-condemned and Britain must be relieved for her imperial responsibilities in relation to India. I am not prepared to admit the soundness of the inference which the Secretary of State derives as necessarily following from the acceptance of the position of the pessimist school. Admitting that there has been steady material retrogression under British rule, it would involve the condemnation of the policy which has hitherto been followed in the Government of this country—it would be a plea, not for the severance of British connection, but rather the strengthening of it by a new bond—by the inauguration of a beneficent departure which has been insisted on by some of the greatest of Anglo-Indian administrators, by men like Munro and Bentick and Elphinstone, and the soundness of which; at least in theory, has never been disputed. The pessimist school, I use the term in no offensive sense, do not indeed call for the withdrawal of British rule, but for the reversal of that policy which has impoverished the country and has been attended with disastrous economic results. India is under British rule, and they insist upon a policy which, in its spirit and in its temper, in its sacred regard for justice and fairplay, in its deep anxiety for the extension of British Freedom along with the British flag, should be truly reflective of the beneficence of

British Greatness. It is no exaggeration to say that behind the economic controversy lies veiled the entire problem of Indian administration. Is the country to be governed for the benefit of the people, for the development of their industries, the accumulation and the husbanding of their resources, or is it to be administered in accordance with those principles which have brought about the terrible impoverishment of the people and all that it implies ? Thus with the economic problem lie wrapped up the gravest administrative issues.

Is the country getting poorer day by day ? The question can be set at rest by an open enquiry, started under the auspices of the Government. Why is not such an enquiry held ? Ours indeed has been a Government of Commissions and Committees. We have had Commissions of all sorts. One more Commission to enquire into the economic condition of the country would not seriously aggravate the situation or dislocate the administrative machinery. The Famine Union in England which include public men of all parties and which have an economic rather than a political object in view, have been pressing for an enquiry into some typical villages. It is in no hostile spirit that they approach this question. Their object is not to find fault, but to get at the truth. The Union desire an answer to the question whether it is true that the cultivator has been sinking deeper and deeper into poverty during recent years. But the Government will not give an answer. The Government will not hold an enquiry.

Why does the Government decline to institute an enquiry for the settlement of what may justly be regarded as the problem of problems ? Has it any reasons to believe that such an enquiry would be fatal to its optimistic creed ? It cannot indeed be said that the Government is without any information on the subject, or that it ignores the gravity of the problem. On two separate occasions it held two separate and confidential enquires. There was an enquiry held in 1880-81 by Lord Ripon. Sir David Barbour was entrusted

with it. There was again an enquiry held during the Viceroyalty of Lord Dufferin. Now these enquires either prove or disprove the allegation that the country is becoming poorer under British rule. If they disprove the allegation, nothing would 'be more natural than that the rulers of India should hasten, by their publication, to refute a charge which involves so serious a reflection upon their own administration. If these enquires do not disprove the charge, nothing would be more natural than that they should keep back the evidence, of which they are in possession. To withhold from the public the results of these enquiries and the evidence on which they are based, raises a presumption against the roseate view of the economic situation. The presumption is strengthened by the steady refusal to hold an open enquiry, and it assumes more or less the complexion of definite proof, in view of facts, the significance of which cannot be overlooked.

#### FAMINES.

The great, broad fact of recurring famines which grew in frequency and intensity during the last quarter of the last century stands out in striking prominence as the infallible index which powerfully appeals to the popular imagination of the growing improverishment of the people. The story is a dismal one. By a moderate calculation the Famines of 1877 and 1878, of 1889 and 1892, of 1897 and 1900 have carried off fifteen millions of people. Another calculation estimates the mortality at 26 millions. If this terrible mortality had taken place in any European country, the conscience of mankind would have received a shock from which it would not have recovered, until the means to prevent so fearful a calamity had been found and applied. If the Mahomedan rulers of European Turkey had permitted such a record of mortality to swell, and that from a preventible cause, in any of the European Provinces, subject to their rule, their expulsion from Europe bag baggage would have been insisted upon with passionate vehemence, and no punishment

would have deemed too great for them. But India is beyond the pale of civilized opinion, and her calamities do not apparently stir the conscience of even the great nation into whose hands her destinies have been consigned by an all-wise Providence. But the record of our famine-mortality is even gloomier than what the above figures imply. Let us, for the purposes of this enquiry, divide the century into four periods of 25 years each. During the *first* period, there were five famines with an estimated mortality of one million. During the *second* period, there were two famines with an estimated mortality of 500,000. In the *third* period, there were six famines with a recorded mortality of five millions; and as we come to the *fourth* and the last period, we notice the increasing gravity of the situation and the terribly high record of mortality. There were eighteen famines during this period with an estimated mortality of twenty-six millions; and the last famine of the last quarter of the expiring century was, in the words of so high an authority as the Viceroy himself, the severest that the country had ever known.

It will thus be seen that famine was an ever-constant calamity during the whole of the century, that it counted its victims by millions and that as the century drew near to its close, it became more frequent in its recurrence and more severe in its incidence. Will anybody explain to me why the famines of the last half of the century were severer and more frequent than those of the first-half—why the famines of the last quarter were severer and more frequent than those of the preceding quarters—and why the last famine of the last year of the expiring century was the severest of them all? Do they not point to the growing impoverishment of the people? Let alone the carefully-drawn calculations, determining the income per head of the population which, though based upon official figures, the Secretary of State now repudiates as conjectural. Is it possible to overlook the significance of these famines, with their increasing severity and frequency and the silent but conclusive testimony which they bear to

the material retrogression of the people? The public have not the time to verify intricate calculations, and they cannot be expected to follow the writer on Indian economics through the mazes of his figures, but these famines with their ever-increasing severity and recurrence leave a most painful impression on the public mind and point, with convincing force, to the soundness of the position of those who hold that the country is steadily retrograding in material prosperity.

But we are told that famines are due to drought; to the operation of natural causes, and Governments and human institutions are powerless to avert them. We ask—is drought confined to India? Nature is impartial in her dispensations—in the distribution of her favours and disfavours. Other countries suffer from drought; but they do not suffer from famines. We must therefore look deeper for the causes of Indian famine. Drought alone will not account for it. Destitution is the root-cause of Indian famine. If the people were comparatively prosperous, if they did not suffer from chronic poverty, they would, in the event of a local failure of crops, make their purchases in the markets of the neighbouring provinces, or they would have a reserve stock upon which they might fall back. But they are absolutely resourceless, sunk in the deepest depths of poverty, living from hand to mouth, often starving upon one meal a day, and they die in their thousands and hundreds of thousands upon the first stress of scarcity, and as the situation deepens they die in their millions and ten of millions, despite the efforts of a benevolent Government to save them.

Nor will it avail to seek for an explanation of Indian poverty in the increase of our population or in the spend-thrift habits of our people. The census returns of 1901 disclose the fact that practically there has been no increase of population and that the increase in certain areas has been counterbalanced by decrease in other parts of the country. It is a well-ascertained fact that the population has not increased in India at the rate it has done in England and some other

European countries. As for the alleged spend-thrift habits of the people, I will say this—that there is not a more abstemious or a more frugal race of people on earth than the peasantry of India. Their sobriety, their strong family affections, their deep concern for their children are the best preservatives of those thrifty habits which are all the more assured when they have their roots in impulse rather than in interest and when the combined operation of both impart to them an added strength. If they occasionally indulge in an extravagant *sradh* or an expensive marriage, they live from day to day, from month to month, and through the recurring years with a rigid parsimony which is but the reflex of their ascetic instincts. Have they not thus lived in the ages past and gone? Empires have come and gone; dynasties have been overthrown; the face of external nature itself has been changed, but the deep-seated habits of our people have remained the same—unchanged and unchangeable amid the vicissitudes of time and fortune. But they were not thus famine-stricken in those days, despite their expensive marriages and *srads*. Why are they famine-stricken now? Oh no—this theory of the alleged extravagance of the Indian peasantry will not do. It will not stand the test of scrutiny. Upon a closer examination, it disappears like the baseless fabric of a vision. The effect of recent currency legislation has been still further to depreciate the condition of the agricultural classes. I am not here discussing its general effect and with adequate regard for all interests; but the artificial fixity of the exchange has entailed heavy loss on the cultivators. The extent of this loss can be calculated with some approximation to facts. The value of the raw produce of the soil, such as grain and pulse, seeds, raw jute and cotton, the proceeds of which directly benefit the cultivators, was in 1901-2, Rs. 61. 30 crores. (P. 10 of Mr. O'Conors Review of Trade.) The equivalent of this at 1s. 4d. per rupee is £ 40,860,000 which is paid by the importers. If the exchange value of the Rupee were 1s. 2d. at the present day, the cultivators would have received, as the

equivalent of this sterling amount Rs. 70,04,57,000, or Rs. 8,74,57,000, more than what they now receive. The cultivators therefore annually incur a loss of about  $8\frac{3}{4}$  crores as the result of the recent currency operations.

The tale of India's growing poverty does not indeed rest upon any syllogistic formula, or upon calculations which though made from official sources are now repudiated by official authority—it is supported by facts, the significance of which it is impossible to overlook, and by the testimony of high authorities, official and non-official. What explanation is there of the fact that in 1886-87 the consumption of salt per head of the population was 13·9 lbs. and that in 1899-1900 the consumption had gone down and was 12·7 lbs. per head of the population? How again do you explain the shrinking of the deposits in the Postal Savings Banks which in 1889-90 amounted to Rs. 164 and in 1899-1900 to Rs. 125 per head of the population? Do not these facts bear eloquent testimony to the steady material retrogression of the people? The evidence of competent authorities is equally conclusive on the subjects I will make three extracts from a Government Resolution, dated the 19th October 1888, which will throw considerable light on the economic condition of the people in some of the great Provinces in India:—

Behar :—"The picture which I have drawn does not, however, show any great prosperity, and shows that the lower classes, which including the weaving class, amounting to 25 P. C. of the population, have little chance of improving their position and that they would have no resources to fall back upon in times of scarcity.....The conclusion to be drawn is that of the agricultural population, a large proportion, say 40 P. C. are insufficiently fed, to say nothing of clothing and housing. They have enough food to support life and to enable them to work ; but they have to undergo long fasts, having for a considerable part of the year to satisfy themselves with one full meal in the day."

N.W.P.—"The Commissioner of Allahabad remarks in a general way that there is very little between the poorer classes of the people and semi-starvation ; and the Collector of Banda writes that a very large number of the lower classes of the population clearly demonstrate by their poor

physique that either they are habitually half-starved or have been in their early years exposed to the trials and severities of a famine."

"Mr. Holderness, writing of the Pilibhit District, says that the landless labourers' condition is not all that could be desired. The United earnings of a man, his wife and two children cannot be put at more than Rs. 3 per month. When prices of food-grains are moderate, work regular, and the health of the house-hold good, this income will enable their family to have one good meal a day, to keep a thatched roof over their head, to buy cheap cotton clothing, and occasionally a thin blanket. The small cultivator is slightly better off, but he has not always enough to eat, or sufficiently warm clothes."

Bombay :—"Poverty amongst the labouring classes of the mofussil most certainly exists, but not only does it exist, but represents the normal condition of these classes. Their houses are poor, their belongings are poor, their food is poor, their clothing very poor. 'Poverty' however, and want, at any rate in India are two very different things, and after many year's residence amongst the people of the country, I have no hesitation in saying that while poverty is the rule (I will speak of the lower classes) actual want is the exception."

Central Provinces :—"Mr. Tawney shows that the ordinary cost of food for a man, his wife and one child is seven half pice a day and if broken rice (kanki) be substituted for rice, the cost can be reduced to four half pice a day. This sum will provide the family with two half lbs. of grain and a small quantity of pulse, leaving one half pice over for salt, vegetables and firewood" Mr. Mackenzie's general conclusion on the whole enquiry is that—"there is no doubt in these provinces a great deal of poverty, but there is very little distress. The people are well-fed, and the only section of them who can be said to be hard pressed for bare subsistence are the hill tribes, who are but little more provident than the beasts of the forests and have to undergo similar vicissitudes in daily food."

These extracts are remarkable. They throw a flood of light upon the economic condition of the people. It is no critic of the Government, but the Government and the officers of Government who speak. And what do they say? In Behar 40 P. C. of the people are insufficiently fed. They have to undergo long fasts and for a considerable part of the year have to satisfy themselves with one full meal in the day. In the Allahabad Division, says the Commissioner, "there is very little between the poorer classes of the people



and semi-starvation." In Bombay poverty amongst the labouring classes is their normal condition. As regards the Central Provinces, we are told on the authority of Mr. Mackenzie, Chief Commissioner, than whom there was not a greater optimist in financial matters, that there is a great deal of poverty, though very little distress. This was the state of things in 1888. Has there been any improvement since then? There has been no change for the better. On the contrary, the economic condition of the people has become much worse, seeing that since then Bombay and the Central Provinces have passed through famines which have been described as the severest of the century, and the North-Western Provinces have suffered from widespread distress. Having regard to the appalling poverty of the people, as disclosed in the Resolution of Government from which I have quoted, it was only to be expected that they would succumb on the first appearance of scarcity, and it is no wonder that they died in their millions when they were overwhelmed by the greatest famine of the century. Their poverty added to the intensity of the famine-conditions and swelled the record of famine-mortality. As the century expires, the picture becomes even deeper in its sombre hue. The Famine Commission of 1901 say in their Report :—

On the extent of the indebtedness of the Bombay cultivators no precise official information, we believe exists ; but there are materials for a probable estimate. We know that the Deccan Ryots Commission of 1876 found that "about one-third of the occupants of Government land are embarrassed with debt ; that their debts average about 18 times their assessment ; and that nearly two-thirds of the debt is secured by mortgage of the land." We also know that the money-lenders, in the villages, visited by the Commission paid about one-eighth of the whole land-revenue—their property having been acquired within the preceeding 20, and for the most part the preceding 10, years—while it was notorious that the private transfers of land were, in most cases, not recorded. The Commission of 1891 found that within the preceding 8 years, land paying 10 per cent. of the revenue in the districts which they visited, had been sold, two-fifths going to the money-lenders ; while lands paying seventeenth-half per cent of the revenue had been mortgaged,

four-seventh going to the sowcars. In his evidence before us, the Chief Secretary to the Bombay Government said that 28 per cent of the land in Broach had passed into the possession of the money-lending classes : and from a report of the Collector of Ahmedabad it appears that in his district expropriation of the old owners has also made considerable way. Taking all these statements into account, and comparing them with the evidence we have recorded, we think it probable that at least one-fourth of the cultivators in the Bombay Presidency have lost possession of their lands ; that less than a fifth are free from debt ; and that the remainder are indebted to a greater or less extent."

It will be seen from the above that in the opinion of the Famine Commission, and they consisted of some of the highest officers of the Government, one fourth of the cultivators in the Bombay Presidency have lost possession of their lands, that more than four-fifths are indebted to a greater or less extent and that only one-fifth of the population are free from debt. Non-official opinion entirely supports this dismal tale of the growing impoverishment of the people. No one will suspect the pioneer of being prejudiced against the Government. Commenting on Mr. Grierson's statement regarding the economic condition of the various sections of the population in Gaya, the Pioneer remarks :—

Briefly, it is that all the persons of the labouring classes, and ten per cent. of the cultivating and artisan classes or forty-five per cent. of the total population, are insufficiently clothed, or insufficiently fed, or both. In Gaya district this would give about a million persons without sufficient means of support. If we assume that the circumstances of Gaya are not exceptional—and there is no reason for thinking otherwise—it follows that nearly one hundred millions of people in British India are living in extreme poverty." \*

Thus according to one of the accredited organs of Anglo-Indian opinion which often is the exponent of official policy and measures, and is generally their staunch supporter, nearly one hundred millions of people in India are living in extreme poverty. This was said in 1893 ; in 1901, an Indian publicist of great experience and knowledge describing the state of things in India says :—" The poverty and suffering of the people are such as to defy description. In fact for

nearly 15 years there has been a continuous famine in India." Is it necessary to produce further evidence in support of the growing impoverishment of the country? Lord George Hamilton himself says that India "is poor—very very poor." If this is the official admission, we have a right to expect that it shall be followed by corresponding official action. Statesmanship can address itself to no higher function. It has no more sacred calling than the devising of measures which would reclaim a great people from the depths of poverty and the physical misery and the intellectual and moral degradation which follow in its train. And if it is true that the greatness of the British Empire, the position of England among the nations of the earth, is largely due to her Indian overlordship, then the obligation to save India from her present critical situation assumes the character of a great national duty—of a truly imperial function—emphasized by considerations of mutual interest and the consciousness of past obligation. We desire to co-operate with the Government in the performance of this duty. We wish to associate ourselves with the rulers of India as co-adjutors, if they will accept our help in the spirit in which it is offered. For we feel that in this matter the Government needs and is entitled to the sympathetic co-operation of the community. It is in this spirit and with no desire to criticise and to find fault that we would venture to suggest some of the remedial measures which the Government may with advantage adopt. The situation is so grave that the adoption of these measures can no longer be postponed with safety to the best interests of the country. Let not the words "too late" be written upon British policy in India. As in the case of the stricken-down patient, so in the case of the afflicted country, there comes a time when remedial measures, however promising, may be too late to be applied with advantage. In the physical as well as in the mortal world, nature takes her revenge upon the dilatory who neglect their opportunities or misread her clear unerring intimations. The remedial

measures which should be adopted in view of the steady material retrogression of the country may be summarized as follows :—

(1) The revival of our old industries and the creation of new ones, (2) the moderate assessment of the land-tax, (3) the remission of taxes which press heavily upon the poor, (4) the stoppage of the drain and the adoption of the necessary administrative measures in that behalf.

### THE INDUSTRIES.

All will admit that the expansion of agriculture at the expense of manufacturing industry is a serious economic evil, for which, so far it prevails in British India, British rule is largely responsible. "No one who considers the economic condition of India," said Lord Dufferin, at the opening of the Exhibition of Industrial Arts in Calcutta, "can doubt that one of its greatest evils is to be found in the fact that the great mass of the people of the country are dependent almost exclusively on the cultivation of the soil." This was not the state of things in the past. It was the manufactures of India which drew European nations to the shores of India. The European traders were first attracted, not by our raw produce, but by our manufactured ware. The fame of the fine muslins of Bengal, her rich silks and brocades has spread far and wide in Asia as well as in Europe. Where are they now? They have practically disappeared. "The arts of spinning and weaving," says Sir Henry Cotton, "which for ages afforded employment to a numerous and industrious population have now become extinct. Families which formerly were in a state of affluence have been reduced to penury." "There is no class of men," exclaims Sir James Caird, "whom our rule has pressed harder upon than the Indian weaver and artisan." What was it that brought about the extinction of our manufactures?

What destructive force was in operation to produce this dire result? I will not answer the question my-

self, but will allow an Englishman to speak; and he shall be no other than the distinguished Orientalist, whose knowledge of Eastern countries in general and of India in particular, was so unique. "The British manufacturer," said Horace Hayman Wilson, "employed the arm of political injustice to keep down and ultimately strangle a competitor with whom he could not have contended on equal terms." It was the fixed policy of the British Government and of the East India Company in the early days of British rule to discourage Indian manufactures and to encourage the growth of Indian raw produce. "This policy," says Mr. Dutt, in his Economic History of British India, "was followed with unwavering resolution and fatal success. Orders were sent out to force Indian artisans to work in the Company's factories; Commercial residents were legally vested with extensive powers over villages and communities of weavers. Prohibitive tariffs excluded Indian silk and cotton goods from England. English goods were admitted into India free of duty, or, on payment of nominal duty." These measures produced a disastrous effect on Indian manufactures.

Let us look at the figures. In 1794 India imported from England only £156 worth of cotton goods; in 1800 the imports had swelled to £19,595; in 1806 they had increased to £48,525; and in 1812 to £107,306. Cotton goods and silk goods were the national manufactures of India. They were subjected to a heavy tariff. British cotton goods paid a duty of three-half per cent. on being imported into India; Indian cotton goods paid a duty of 10 per cent. on being imported into England. British silk goods paid an import duty of three-half per cent. in India; Indian silk goods paid an import duty of 20 per cent. in England. This was the state of things in 1840. Our cotton manufactures had been practically died out. The import of Indian goods into England had dwindled to one-fourth in twenty-one years (from 1814 to 1835) from 12 lakhs of pieces to 3 lakhs of pieces, while the import of British cotton

goods into India had increased fifty times within the same period, viz. from less than a million yards to over fifty million yards. But Indian silk goods still maintained their footing, and, though heavily weighted, carried on an unequal competition. But even this was not to be. In vain did Mr. Larpent, Chairman of the East Indian Company, plead in his evidence before the Select Committee of 1840 for the reduction of the duty on silk goods to save it from the fate which had overtaken Indian Cotton goods. It had been the settled policy of England in India, ever since her rise in political power, to convert India into a land of raw produce for the benefit of the manufactures and operatives of England. And one of the members of the Select Committee, Mr. Brocklehurst, openly avowed this policy when he said :— “ It would be more desirable perhaps that India should produce the raw material and this country show its skill in perfecting that raw material.” “ The course of things in India,” replied Mr. Larpent, “ is leading to that. \* \* But I submit that as this is the last of the expiring manufactures of India, the only one where there is a chance of introducing the native manufactures at least let it have a fair chance.” The chance was not given. British silk goods and India silk goods were both imported into France. In fair and open competition, the Indian silk goods commanded a wider sale at the French market. The jealous susceptibilities of the British manufacturers were roused. The importation of Indian silk goods into France was prohibited, “ and British goods had in consequence a preference with French buyers.” But as soon as the prohibition was taken off, the British trade to France was practically annihilated. This was too much for the British manufacturers. They would not stand it. They were resolved to drive Indian silk goods from the only foreign market that was open to them. The prohibition was renewed, and the last of the expiring manufactures of India was crushed out of existence.

Could there be a more melancholy tale of unfeeling selfishness and cruel injustice which destroyed our manufactures and drove the great mass of our population upon the soil, to wring from it a bare subsistence when they could and to die in their millions when they could not. I am free to admit that the application of steam to the development of manufactures completed the downfall of our industries. But selfishness rather than science is responsible for our industrial ruin. Can it even now be said that this policy has received its last quietus, with the growth of progressive and imperial ideas and the closer relationship between the two countries? The old jealousy is still dominant in the counsels of our rulers. Or else how are we to account for the excise duty levied upon India cotton fabrics which handicaps them in competition with other countries? Is it too much to hope that the Delhi Durbar will mark the inauguration of a new era of equal justice, pervading every branch of the administration? Are we not indeed entitled to this paltry boon of equal justice, seeing how greatly indebted England is to India for her commercial and industrial expansion? Not to speak of the market which India offers for English goods, it is Indian wealth which towards the close of the eighteenth century communicated an extraordinary impulse to the growth and development of British commerce and manufactures. Thus writes Mr. Brooks Adams in his *Law of Civilization and Decay*, a book written with no political object in view :—

The influx of the Indian treasure, by adding considerably to the nations cash capital, not only increased its stock of energy but added much to its flexibility and the rapidity of its movement.

Plassey was fought in 1757, and probably nothing has ever equalled the rapidity of the change which followed in 1760 the flying-shuttle appeared, and coal began to replace wood in smelting. In 1764 Hargreaves invented the spinning-jenny, in 1779 Crompton, contrived the mule, in 1785 Cartwright patented the power-loom, and chief of all, in 1768 Watt matured the steam-engine, the most perfect of all events of centralising energy. But though these machines served

as outlets for the accelerating movement of the time, they did not cause that acceleration. In themselves inventions are passive, many of the most important having lain dormant for centuries, waiting for a sufficient store of force to have accumulated to set them working. That store must always take the shape of money, and money not hoarded, but in motion.' \* \* \* \*

'From 1694 to Plassey the growth had been relatively slow. For more than sixty years after the foundation of the Bank of England, its smallest note had been for £20, a note too large to circulate freely, and which rarely travelled far from Lombard Street. Writing in 1790 Burke mentioned that when he came to England in 1750 there were not "twelve bankers' shop" in the provinces, though then, he said, they were in every marked town. Thus the arrival of the Bengal silver not only increased the mass of money, but stimulated its movement ; for at once, in 1759, the bank issued £10 and £15 notes, and in the country private firms poured forth a flood of paper.'

Having regard to the past policy of the Government, we feel that we are entitled, both by reason of that policy (for wrong must be redressed) and the substantial help which England derived from India in establishing her industrial pre-eminence, to claim a sympathetic treatment of the industrial problem.

England destroyed our manufactures by prohibitive tariffs and by the pursuit of an industrial policy which all fair-minded Englishmen must condemn. England has benefited enormously from Indian wealth and commerce. Will she not lend us a helping hand and co-operate with us in the blessed task of working out our industrial salvation ? If we had a potential voice in the Government of our country, there would be no question as to what policy we should follow. We would unhesitatingly adopt a policy of protection. That was indeed the policy of England before her industries attained their maturity. England reared her manufacturing power by protection ; and then she turned a free-trader and invited other nations to accept free-trade principles. The other nations, including the British Colonies, knew better, and are now rearing their manufacturing power by protection. "But in India" says Mr. Dutt, "the manufac-



ing power of the people was stamped out by protection against her industries ; and then free-trade was forced on her to prevent a revival." But we fear protection is out of the question. May we not at least hope for a fair and equitable treatment of our industries, without reference to other interests than our own and without their being handicapped by duties which must interfere with their expansion ? We have heard a great deal in these days about State encouragement of our arts and industries—about technical institutes which are to minister to our industries. But where is the technical institute maintained by Government which serves this great progress. The mining industry in Bengal has made great progress. A mining college would be serviceable to the industry. The proposal was actually made last year in Congress.

But the Government as yet shows no signs of moving in the matter. There is a proposal to organize a commercial Department. Will it help the national industries and guide them along a beneficent channel ? Will it call forth and develop a spirit of enterprise among our people ? We know not—but this we do know that we have a solemn duty in this matter. We have a high Commission which we cannot ignore. As the guides and the instructors of our people, we have to tell them what is best for them. If the Government will not listen to our appeals, they at any rate will not turn a deaf ear to our words of counsel and advice ; and we desire to tell them in all seriousness and with all the emphasis that we can command that if they wish well to themselves and to their country, they must turn their thought to commercial enterprise and the development of the marvellous resources of their country. The bread-problem is the problem of problems and must be solved. The professions are crowded. The services cannot provide a place for all of us. Agriculture will not save our people from the terrible visitations of famine. The masses are starving, and when famine comes they die in their millions ; the middle classes

are carrying on an arduous struggle to maintain body and soul together. Everywhere poverty and destitution stare us in the face. What is to be the solution ? The gorgeous India was the fable-land of wealth. Are we alone to be excluded from the rich treasures of untold wealth which our mother-earth shelters in her bosom and which she has sheltered through the ages past, so that her children in their own good time may reap the fruits thereof ? Who has ever been deprived of a mother's choicest gifts ? If the country is to be saved, we must leave the beaten track of the services and the professions, and be the pioneers and organizers of a vast industrial movement, which will secure to us the possession of that wealth which nature has ordained for us, and which when so secured, will lead to the final and the satisfactory solution of the industrial problem. Let us guide the public mind of India along this beneficent channel.

#### THE LAND-REVENUE ASSESSMENT.

In an agricultural country the land-tax is necessarily a question of great importance. The success of agricultural operations largely depends upon fixity of tenure and fixity of assessment—upon the assurance given to the cultivator that he will be permitted to enjoy the fruits of his labour and of his improvements. It is the Permanent Settlement which lies at the root of the great prosperity of Bengal, and if we cannot have a Permanent Settlement in other parts of India, we should at least have a moderate land-tax fixed for a reasonably long period. The question has been the subject of keen controversy and has elicited an authoritative pronouncement from the Government of India. In non-permanently settled estate where the land-tax is paid by the land-lord, Lord Curzon has practically limited the state-demand to one-half the actual rent ; but where the land-tax is paid by the cultivator no clear limitation of this kind has been imposed. Nor does Lord Curzon accept the principle of Lord Ripon's Government that an enhancement of the state-demand at

periodical revisions is only to take place when there has been a rise in the price of crops. In the older provinces His Excellency would fix thirty years as the limit during which an assessment would be in force. Some of these concessions are an accordance with the memorial which was submitted to the Secretary of State on the 20th December 1900 by some distinguished men who had long served Government in high and responsible offices.

Among the signatories were Sir Richard Girth, Sir John Jardine, Mr. Garsten, Mr. Reynolds, Sir William Wedderburn and Mr. R. C. Dutt. They advocated, among other things, that where the land-revenue is paid directly by the cultivators, as in most parts of Madras and Bombay, the Government demand should be limited to 50 per cent. of the value of the nett produce, after deducting charges of cultivation. They recommended that a limit should be fixed in each province beyond which it may not be possible to surcharge the land-tax with local cesses. These local cesses, I understand, are a heavy burden on land-lords in the North-Western Provinces. I fear that in the existing state of official opinion it is impossible for us to obtain a Permanent Settlement for all India, however much we may wish it and however much we may be justified in making such a demand, having regard to the past pledges of the Government.

Three Governors-General under the East India Company, three Viceroys under the Crown, men like Lord Canning, Lord Lawrence and Lord Ripon, exerted their great influence with a view to impose a permanent limitation on the land-tax in India. But they were over-ruled by the authorities in England. It is not likely that any appeal which we might make for the extension of Permanent Settlement would command greater attention. But a moderate land-tax, fixed for a reasonably long period, is absolutely essential to the prosperity of our agricultural population, and we must insist upon it, in season, and out of season, alike in the interests of the Government and

of the people ; and it seems to me that the wisest course for us to follow would be to take our stand upon the Memorial of the distinguished men, to which I have referred, and appeal to the Government for the very moderate concessions which they suggest. Such an appeal, urged with moderation and persistency is bound to bear fruit, even in the near future.

#### REMISSION OF TAXATION.

Among the remedial measures which I have suggested is the remission of taxation. An unanswerable case was made out in its favour by Mr. Gokhale in his Budget Speech which has won for him the gratitude and the admiration of his countrymen. An overflowing treasury with a starving population is an anomaly which will strike every one. The conclusion is inevitable that more is taken from the tax-payer than what may fairly be required of him, and when the tax-payer, as he usually is in India, the starving ryot, the remission of taxation becomes a matter of paramount obligation on the part of the rulers of the land. For many long years we have patiently submitted to a heavy burden ; and now that since 1898-99, despite frontier wars and heavy famine expenditure we have had years of uninterrupted surpluses, we are entitled to look forward to the remission of taxation. Since 1884-85 we have had a number of new taxes imposed upon us, yielding, roughly speaking, an annual revenue of 9 crores of Rupees. Since 1884-85, we have had 12 years of surpluses amounting to over 28 crores and 7 years of deficits amounting to about 14½ crores, and since 1898-99, our surpluses have not been interrupted. Thanks to the statesman-like policy of Lord Curzon, the prospects of peace on the frontiers have become more assured, and thanks to the bounty of nature which has been somewhat deferred, the grim spectre of famine does not darken the view.

The currency has been steadied, though by the adoption of a policy which has given rise to serious differences of opi-

nion, and the fluctuating rupee no longer frightens the rulers of India or robs them of their peace. From all sides therefore we have indications which justify the hope—the very reasonable hope—that the strain on our finances is at an end and that our surpluses will be continued (leave alone the question as to whether they have been underestimated or not.) May we not therefore plead for relief—for the mitigation of that burden which has pressed upon us so heavily and must press with crushing weight upon our starving peasantry? We are grateful for the remission of the arrears of land-revenue in the famine-stricken areas. But it is not enough: it does not go to root of the matter. What is wanted is not temporary alleviation, but permanent relief. If the Government, for the benefit of its European Servants, could initiate a policy of granting exchange compensation allowance at a time of deficit—if in 1893-94, it could pay 62 lakhs of Rupees \* as exchange compensation allowance

\* Exchange Compensation Allowance.

Expenditure on Exchange Allowance since 1893-94

	Rs.		Rs.
1893-94 ...	62,44,110	1898-99 ...	48,59,430
1894-95 ...	1,24,95,910	1899-1900 ...	48,29,370
1895-96 ...	1,33,81,630	1900-1 ...	46,00,930
1896-97 ...	94,33,250	1901-2 } Figures not available but	
1897-98 ...	69,39,740	1902-3 } 46 lakhs may be taken for	
			each year or 92 lakhs in all.

The deficit of the year 1893-94, when the E. C. A. was granted, was Rs. 1,54,70,000, of which Rs. 62,44,110 was due to E. C. A. The ordinary deficit which would have occurred, if E. C. A. was not granted was Rs. 92,26,000 in round numbers. This deficit was anticipated at the time when the E. C. A. was recommended by the Government of India to the Secretary of State, as the following extract from a despatch will show :—

“We have considered carefully the effect of granting these concessions upon our financial position. Apart from the expenditure now proposed (i. e. expenditure on E. C. A.) the deficit of the year will amount to 57 lakhs. Including the cost of giving effect to our present recommendations the total deficit will, therefore, amount to 100 lakhs.

when its deficit was a crore and a half—the Government might surely, for the benefit of a half-famished people, remit taxes which press heavily upon them, and at a time when it has a large surplus and when it may be reasonably hoped that its financial embarrassments are at an end.

I have heard a great deal about India being the most lightly taxed country in the world. Even in the domain of romance there is not a prettier picture, but the illusion quickly disappears when the search-light of scrutiny is turned upon it, when the stern and grim figures which reveal their own tale are marshalled in their proper places and are permitted to hear their silent but eloquent testimony. Lawyers say that circumstances cannot lie. The financier says that figures are even more veracious witnesses. Let us for a moment turn to the testimony of figures. In India the total pressure of taxation is about 85 crores \* which distributed among a population of 232 millions gives an incidence of Rs. 3-10-6 per head, or a percentage of 12.29 on the average

This deficit we propose to accept *without taking any special steps to meet it*. We have not overlooked the very grave objections to accepting, and more especially to adding to, the deficit of the current year (1893-94). But after very carefully weighing all the issues involved, we have come to the conclusion that the circumstances are so special as to justify a departure from the ordinary rule of sound finance which requires that measures should be taken to remove a deficit as soon as its occurrence is seen to be probable."

(The Government of India did not take any special measures during the year to avoid the public reproach of granting E. C. A. to the high-paid officers by resorting to taxation. The deficit of the year 1893-94 was, accordingly allowed to appear in the accounts. This deficit, which would have recurred with increasing effect in 1894-95 owing to the expenditure  $1\frac{1}{4}$  crores on E. C. A. against  $62\frac{1}{2}$  lakhs in 1893-94 was wiped off and converted into a surplus by the imposition of customs duties affecting the general mass of the population.)

\* This figure calculated on the supposition that the cultivator actually pays more as land-tax than what reaches the coffers of Government. This represents the pressure of land-tax on the ryots which is much in excess of the total land-revenue of about  $30\frac{1}{2}$  crores.

income. The total taxation income in the United Kingdom in 1898-99 (the normal year before the War) was 90 millions sterling.

The population being  $41\frac{1}{2}$  millions, the incidence of taxation is £2-3s. per head. Now the average income per head is £36 and the pressure of taxation on the income of an Englishman is therefore only 6 per cent. against 12.2 per cent. in the case of the native of India. These figures disprove the oft repeated declaration of the Government that "India is the most lightly taxed country in the world." It is, of course, true that the amount of taxation, *per se* is light ; but if taxation means pressure on the income, India is more heavily taxed than England, or perhaps any other country in the world.

But if taxation is to be remitted, the practical question to consider is what is the tax which should have a preferential consideration ? I have no hesitation in saying that the duty on salt is the first that should be dealt with. It is one of the primary canons of taxation that the necessities of life should not be taxed. But salt is a prime necessary of life, and it is taxed. Nay more, the duty on salt has been enhanced, and when it was enhanced in 1888, Lord Cross, then Secretary of State, declared in a despatch to the Government of India that the increase in the salt duty should be looked upon as temporary, and that no effort should be spared to reduce the general duty as speedily as possible to the former rate.

Lord George Hamilton took the same view of the matter in his Budget Speech in the House of Commons in 1895 when he emphasized the necessity of reducing the salt duty as early as possible. Lord George Hamilton in his recent speech on the Budget in the House of Commons expressed the opinion that it was the enhanced duty which interfered with the consumption of salt. The reduction of the duty therefore is an obligation which the rulers of the land cannot ignore.

I find that an agitation has been set on foot for the total repeal of the income-tax. I cannot say that I am in sympathy with this agitation. In a general scheme for the remission of taxes, the salt-tax must have the first place ; and if the Government is able to proceed still further with the reduction of taxation, the minimum of taxable income for the income-tax should be raised. The minimum is now fixed at the sum of 500 rupees a year. It should be raised to 1,000 rupees a year, or if you like to a still higher figure. The poor man must claim our first consideration, not because the measure of sacrifice must be even, and society has not right to call upon him to make a heavier sacrifice for the general purposes of the state than what is required of the rich man. The necessities of life and the income necessary for the bare maintenance of the bread-winner and his family must be relieved of all taxation. In England the minimum of taxable income £150 a year. The requirements of the Englishman are no doubt more numerous ; his standard of living is higher. But on the other hand, it is to be borne in mind that the Englishman lives for himself and his wife and children ; whereas the Indian, under the operation of the joint-family system, has a large number of relatives to feed and support. In any case I trust the minimum of taxable income will be raised.

In this connection I desire to call the attention of the Government to a special appropriation of the income-tax which was made when the income-tax was first levied. The income-tax law of 1860 set apart one per cent. of the proceeds of the tax for expenditure locally on public works. In the five years during which the Act was in force, the sum which accrued from this source to local public works funds amounted to £1,611,410 or 161 lakhs of Rupees.\* Why should not such a course be followed now—why should the income-tax be entirely merged in the general revenues of the

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\* I cannot recommend the absolute surrender of any part of the general revenues. I regard them as all Imperial alike..... To this



Empire ? How many useful and beneficent public works which are now starved or are abandoned would, if such a policy were in force, be carried out for the general benefit of the country ?

The only objection that I can think of the remission of taxation is the possible increase of the military expenditure of the Empire. There are two proposals before us—one is the addition of nearly a million sterling to our military expenditure to meet the cost of the efficiency of the reformed British army in India. The other is in the nature of a suggestion thrown out by the Secretary of State in the course of His Budget speech to the effect that there might be an addition to the European army in India. Against both these proposals, we ought to record our emphatic protest. Lord Curzon will not consent to the withdrawal of a single European soldier from India. But will His Excellency permit the Home Government to trust upon the Indian tax-payer the burden of a bloated army, far in excess of his requirements ? Recent events have demonstrated the fact that our army even as now maintained is really in excess of what the country needs and that it is maintained on a footing which more or less serves the purpose of an imperial reserve. We

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I would make only one exception ; namely, that I would give up one-fourth of even income-tax might be raised to the Local Governments for public improvement according to the principal establishment by Mr. James Wilson (Financial Member) in 1860.

[Sir Richard Temple's Minute dated 7th November 1868.]

The following is the main outline Mr. Wilson's proposal in his own words :—

“On incomes above 500 hundred rupees we propose a tax at the rate of 3 P. C. for the public treasury and 1 P. C. to be appropriated strictly to local purposes, and in regard to the appropriation of which where Municipalities exist, they will have a voice ; the charge may be very small and the good to be derived from such a contribution may be very great. In the United States which boast of the free Government in the world, a property-tax is collected by the Government of each State, of a considerable amount, and applied in part to general, and in part to local and Municipal purposes.”

could spare 20,000 British troops for the recent military operations without risk to our interests. It is not the case of the loan of a watch-dog, as pithily put by His Excellency the Viceroy. The watch-dog was lent for such a long period and was so long absent that we did not miss him at all, and we felt that we could do without him. There cannot be the smallest objection to the location of British troops in India to serve as an imperial reserve ; but it is only equitable that the cost should be borne by the British Treasury.

I contend that the incidence of the military expenditure is heavier in India than it is in the United Kingdom, and we are therefore entitled, if not to relief, at any rate, to exemption from the imposition of further burdens. If the taxable wealth of a country is determined by proceeds of the income tax then we find that for every rupee of such tax the Government of India spends 14 Rs. upon the army ; whereas the British Government for every pound of such tax spends about £4. The total cost of the defence of India is as follows :—

Army	...	...	...	26.50 crores
Military works	...	...	...	1.20 crores
Marine	...	...	...	.75 crores

Total—Rs....28.45 crores

The expenditure of the United Kingdom on the Army and Navy is about 60 Millions. In India the revenue from income-tax is about two crores of Rupees. In the United Kingdom the revenue from the income-tax on the basis of a 6*d.* rate (corresponding to the 2½ p. c. rate in India) is about 15 millions. The proportion therefore of income-tax to expenditure on the defence of the country is as 1 to 4 in the United Kingdom. In India it is as 1 to 14. If moreover we deduct the greater portion of the charges for the Navy which is maintained for the defence of the colonial possessions of the Empire, the proportion for the United Kingdom will be much less. Thus India pays proportion-

ately to her national wealth  $3\frac{1}{2}$  times more than what the United Kingdom pays towards the cost of the country's defence.

However that may be, we ought to record our strong protest against any further expansion of our military expenditure. "Millions of money have been spent," wrote the Government of India in their despatch of the 25th March 1890, "on armament and fortification to provide for the security of India, not against domestic enemies or to prevent the incursion of warlike peoples of adjoining countries, but to maintain the supremacy of British power in the East." They urged that "in the maintenance of the British forces in this country, a just and even liberal view should be taken of the charges which should legitimately be made against the Indian revenues." We press the same view. A small instalment of justice has been done by the very paltry relief which has been afforded to the Indian exchequer by the annual grant from the British exchequer of about £ 250,000 a year in accordance with the recommendations of the Welby Commission. But that is not enough, and we appeal to the Government of India to press upon the Home Government the statesmanlike views which it urged in 1890. Let it not be said that because we the people of India "have no voice in the matter," "an excessive military tribute" is demanded from us. In asking for an equitable adjustment of the military charges we have the high authority of the Government of India behind us ; and our claim founded upon the highest justice is strengthened by the magnificent services which India rendered to the Empire during the recent wars and to which no one has borne more eloquent testimony than His Excellency the Viceroy. We appeal for financial justice, and I am sure we do not appeal, in vain.

#### THE DRAIN

One of the chief causes which have contributed to the impoverishment of the people is the annual drain which,

says a writer on Indian economies, "has tapped India's very heart-blood." Lord Salisbury has himself observed that "much of the revenue of India is exported without a direct equivalent." The drain of the last thirty years of the 19th century has been estimated at £ 900,000,000 without interest, at the rate of £ 30,000,000 a year. This drain represents a distinct loss of national wealth and resources. As Sir George Wingate has observed :—

"The taxes spent in the country from which they are raised are totally different in their effect from taxes raised in one country and spent in another.....In this case, they constitute no mere transfer of one portion of the national income from one set of citizens to another, but are an absolute loss and extinction of the whole amount drawn from the taxed country."

What is to be the remedy? It is simple enough, if the Government will only adopt it. The revival of old and the introduction of new industries, the wider employment of the people in the higher offices of State, a more equitable adjustment of charges between England and India in matters in which both countries are interested, would go a long way to check the drain and the material exhaustion consequent thereon. British rule represents the Government of India by one of the most civilized nations of the world. It is a proud and glorious record. In point of culture and enlightenment and in its ideals of Government, it is far removed from most Governments which preceded it. But the conquerors of old soon made the conquered country their own, and returned to the people the money which they had wrung from the people. They thus stimulated the springs of domestic industry and contributed to the material prosperity of the people. Might we not ask the English rulers of India, whose proud mission it is to govern India for the benefit of India, to return to the people the people's wealth and thus lay broad and deep the foundations of our material prosperity?

#### THE REMEDY

What are to be the means for enforcing the remedial

measures for checking the growing impoverishment of the country? How is economy to be enforced—how are the taxes to be imposed without hampering the springs of industry—how are the sources of national wealth to be deepened and widened—how are agriculture to be improved and the arts and manufactures stimulated? The sovereign remedy is to be found in the practice of the British constitution. Give the people a potential voice over the control of the public expenditure, and economy will follow as surely as the night follows the day. When people spend their own money, the strongest motives of self-interest enforce economy. When they spend other people's money and are responsible only to their consciences, they soon make the discovery that they can satisfy their consciences somehow—that the divine monitor within is keenly responsive to the promptings of interest and passion—and so they grow careless and extravagant. The British constitution has recognized this truth and has embalmed it in the constitutional usage of the land. The British constitution, one of the finest products of human wisdom and genius, has always shown the utmost solicitude to ensure to the representatives of the people and to them alone the full and absolute control over the public purse. A money bill becomes law when it has passed the House of Commons, and without reference to the House of Lords and without the assent of the Sovereign. It seems to me that the time has come when a definite, forward step should be taken towards the recognition of a similar principle in the Government of India, subject to such checks as circumstances may suggest. It is worthy of consideration whether a further expansion of the Legislative Councils should not take place, with representatives from each Districts in the local Councils, armed with the power of control over the public expenditure, and whether an expansion of the Imperial Council upon similar lines may not with advantage be introduced. It is thus and thus only will economy be ensured, the burden of taxation lightened, the

material prosperity of the people stimulated, and the financial position of the Government placed upon a sound and satisfactory footing.

### THE WIDER EMPLOYMENT OF OUR PEOPLE

I have referred to the question of the economic drain, and from year to year we have appealed to the Government from this platform to stop it, or if in the present relations between England and India this cannot be done, to curtail its volume. From a return ordered by the House of Commons, it appears that the salaries, allowances and pensions to Europeans in India drawing £100 a year or more were £10,274,246 in 1889-90. It must be much more now, as exchange compensation allowance has since been added. The bulk of this vast sum of money is necessarily spent out of India. The employment of a costly foreign agency for Government of a country is, in the best of circumstances, a heavy financial burden and often a financial loss; in the case of India, it is among the primary causes of her growing impoverishment. The wider employment of the people in the public service of their own country is one of the chief remedial measures which will naturally suggest itself. Racial disqualifications have long been abolished. Merit is the sole test of qualification for public employment. This principle has again and again been affirmed; but there is as yet very wide divergence between principle and practice. The noble principle of equality affirmed by the Queen's Proclamation has been accepted with unhesitating assent by a long line of distinguished Viceroys. Lord Curzon has declared it to be the golden rule of his conduct. We have for many long years looked forward to the complete redemption of pledges, so solemnly given, by authorities so distinguished, and associated with the honoured name of a Sovereign whose memory is cherished, with grateful affection by the people of India. But as yet we are far removed from this blessed consummation. The Resolution of the House of Commons

of the second of June 1893, affirming the principle of simultaneous examinations for the Indian Civil Services, remains a dead letter. The appeal of the Indian Association praying for the wider employment of natives of India in the minor Civil Services has practically been rejected. The guaranteed appointments in the Rurki College are withheld from natives of India, coming from the Presidencies of Bengal, Bombay and Madras. The appointments in Cooper's Hill are no longer thrown open to the unrestricted competition of Indian candidates. We are excluded from the competitive examinations held in London for recruitment to the higher offices in the Police service. Are not all these distinct breaches of the Queen's Proclamation, open violations of that mandate which she laid upon her Ministers by her royal command? Those who bring about the indefinite postponement of the redemption of solemn pledges and seek to quibble away the gracious promises, enshrined in historic documents, to which the national faith is pledged, have no conception of the irreparable injury they do to the British Government in India; for in the words of the Viceroy, addressed to the Talukdars of Oudh, it is English veracity rather than English valour or intelligence which has built up and consolidated this vast Empire. Those who shake the confidence of the people in the pledges of the Government weaken the foundations of imperial rule. In the phrenzy of power they may seek to trifle with the moral laws; but the mandate of the Almighty has made them paramount, and none can defy them with impunity.

As regards the open competitive examination for the Indian Civil Service, the prospects of Indian candidates have sensibly diminished; and well they may. The marks in Sanscrit and Arabic are 500; in Greek and Latin they are 750. Roman and Greek History, each of which carries 400 marks, Roman Law and Political Science to each of which 500 marks are attached, are subjects which Indian students may take up; but they are handicapped by the

nature of the questions set. In all these subjects, extracts from the Latin and Greek authors are placed before the students, and to be able to answer them they must know these classical languages. Is a knowledge of the classical languages necessary for the thorough mastery of political science which is altogether a modern branch of knowledge, or even of Roman or Greek History? So many Latin and Greek passages and quotations are introduced in the question-papers on these subjects that I think it would be no exaggeration to say that no candidate, not knowing Latin and Greek, could hope to gain even half the maximum marks in these subjects. What is most inexcusable is the free quotation from Greek authors in the paper on Political Science. It is therefore practically impossible for an Indian student to take up these subjects. Thus an English candidate has for his Latin 750+400 marks and for his Greek 750+400 marks, or a total of 2,300 marks against 500 marks only in Sanscrit or Arabic for Indian student. Or if the Indian student is exceptionally clever, he may take up both Sanscrit and Arabic, and in that case there will be his 1,000 marks of the English candidate. But latter's knowledge of Greek and Latin gives him an enormous advantage over the Indian candidate; for it enables him to take up Roman Law and Political Science, each of which carries 500 marks. Thus it will be seen that Indian students, whose education is not classical, are placed at a serious disadvantage at the competitive examination for the Indian Civil Service, and I very much fear that their failure is largely due to the conditions of the examination to which I have called attention. There is no reason why Indian History, like English, Roman or Greek History, or why Persian, the most beautiful among the living languages of the East to which modern Urdu is largely indebted for its vocabulary, should not be included among the subjects of examination? From an educational point of view, is Indian history less interesting or useful than the History of Rome or Greece—or is Persian



a less effective discipline of the mind than French, German or Italian? The considerations to which I have referred call for definite action on our part. The British Committee may be invited to initiate the necessary measures in this behalf.

In regard to this question, if we have not altogether lost ground, we have at any rate not made much progress. For the present we are confronted with the forces of reaction, and we must bide our time. But when that time comes, and there are already signs of the bursting of the new dawn, let us bear in mind that the first duty which we owe to ourselves and to the distinguished man who has worked so long, and so unselfishly for India's welfare—India's Grand Old Man—Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, is to apply ourselves to the fulfilment of the Resolution of the House of Commons with which he was so prominently associated. We must insist upon the practical affirmation of the principle of simultaneous examinations for the Indian Civil Services; and if we insist upon it in season and out of season, our rulers will, I have no doubt, yield to the importunity of our demand what they have denied to the justice of our cause. In the long and glorious history of national triumphs, I have not yet known of the failure of a cause such as ours is, based upon the highest justice and the plainest considerations of expediency; and if we do fail, the fault will be ours.

#### THE MILITARY SERVICE

As a part of the question of the wider employment of our people in the public service, it is impossible not to refer to the exclusion of our countrymen from the commissioned ranks in the army. The bravest native soldier, a born warrior, possessed, it may be, of military instincts which he has inherited from a long line of ancestors, cannot in these days rise beyond the rank of a Subadar-Major or a Ressaldar-Major in the British army. The youngest British subaltern who was not born when the veteran won his spurs is his superior military officer, whose orders he must carry out and

whose higher rank he must recognize by the tribute of the salute. A more unnatural state of things does not perhaps prevail in any other country ; and to imagine that the proud Sikh or the intrepid Gurkha warrior does not feel the anomaly and the humiliation which it implies is to hold that he is something better or worse than human. It was not thus that Roman rule was consolidated in the most distant parts of Rome's world-wide Empire. It was not thus that the Mahomedan rulers of India established their sovereignty among hostile and alien races. It is not thus that Russia upholds her great Empire in Central Asia. Trust is the secret of successful imperial rule. Mistrust is the weapon of the weak and the suspicious, not of the brave and the generous. Caution carried to the verge of timidity is a feeble instrument of Government. A wise step has indeed been taken which represents a departure from the policy of the past. We desire to express our gratitude to His Excellency the Viceroy for the organization of the *Imperial Cadet Corps*. We hope it represents the inauguration of a new and beneficent policy. Might we not appeal to His Excellency to follow it up by throwing open the commissioned ranks in the Indian army to the representatives of the military races in India and to those who, by an adequate training and test, prove their fitness for military command ? It would be a substantial recognition of their loyalty which would be more acceptable to them than all the honours which titular distinctions may confer. There is no name more honoured in Indian history than that of Henry Lawrence who died in the performance of his duty. Thus wrote Henry Lawrence in the early fifties :—" If Asiatics and Africans can obtain honourable position in the Armies of Russia and France, surely Indians, after a tried service of a century under England's banner, are entitled to the same boon, nay justice."

## THE SEPARATION OF JUDICIAL AND EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS.

Among the reforms which have occupied a prominent place in our programme is the question of the separation of judicial and executive functions in the administration of criminal justice. We claim to have brought it within the range of practical politics, and the question is now pending for final decision by the Government of India. A memorial was presented by Lord Hobhouse and several other distinguished men, praying for the speedy introduction of this reform. The memorial has been forwarded to the Government of India; but no orders have yet been passed. It is with some little disappointment we notice that this question has not been included among the twelve administrative problems which Lord Curzon has selected for solution; but if it is true that justice is the bulwark of thrones and States, then there can be no more urgent or pressing consideration than a proposal which seeks to improve the administration of justice in India and to relieve it of the scandals which are inseparable from the present system. The soundness of the principle which underlies the reform is admitted, but the practical difficulties in the way of giving effect to it are said to be great. In the early stages of the controversy, the reform was objected to, on the ground of expense. But Mr. Perozeshaw Metha and Mr. Dutt have satisfactorily disposed of the objections which have been raised on the score. Let me ask—has the British Government in India been ever deterred from the pursuit of any scheme upon which it set its heart, on the ground of want of funds? In a year of deficit it paid exchange compensation allowance of 62 lakhs of rupees to its European servants. In the face of heavy deficits, it kept up a military expenditure which was out of all proportion to its resources. If the security of the country against foreign invasion and domestic dissensions is a matter of supreme concern to the Government, hardly less so is the efficiency and the purity of the system, under

which justice is administered. But the financial objection is manifestly untenable in these years of overflowing surpluses. For the purposes of an experiment in selected areas, it never was tenable. In Bengal the administration of justice brings in clear profit of nearly 25 lakhs of rupees a year. In the natural order of things the necessary expenditure for the improvement of the system of justice would be the first charge upon this surplus. The proposed reform is admittedly an improvement, whatever might be the executive reasons which stand in the way of its adoption. A portion of the surplus might surely be applied towards the inauguration of this experiment. But the truth is that it is not financial reasons which block the way. There are, we are told, considerations of administrative expediency—whatever that may mean—which render the separation of executive and judicial functions undesirable; and there is the fetish of prestige, to which due worship must be rendered. But prestige which is divorced from justice—which perpetuates a system which often defeats the ends of justice—is not true prestige and can never conduce to the strength or stability of Governments. The prestige theory however, though influentially supported, vanishes on the slightest examination. Commissioners of Divisions, Secretaries to Government, Members of the Board of Revenue exercise no judicial functions, and yet their prestige is much higher than that of District officers. It is altogether an irrational sentiment, the remnant of an ancient prejudice, which stands in the way of this reform. We have destroyed the outer barriers; the citadel will soon fall. Reason and equity and the conscience of the community are with us. It is the unreasoning clamour of an exclusive bureaucracy, jealously guarding its powers and its privileges, which for the moment has silenced the voice of reason. But the last word in the controversy has yet to be pronounced by the Viceroy, and we know that His Excellency is the keeper of his own conscience.

## THE POLICE.

The reform of the Police is one of Lord Curzon's twelve chosen problems. His Excellency has rightly accorded to this question the prominence which it occupies. The Police is the one department of State which is in constant touch with the people, and the attitude of the people in relation to the Government is largely determined by the character of the Police. Its efficiency therefore is a matter of supreme importance. At the present moment, a Commission is sitting and is collecting evidence with a view to suggest measures for the reform of the Police. For the President of the Commission I have great respect. His conscientiousness, his sympathy with the people over whom he is placed in authority and his desire to serve them have won for him their respect and esteem. At the same time, it must freely be admitted that the representation of the Indian community on the Commission is inadequate, and the Commission evidently has not been constituted in accordance with the broad and salutary principle laid down by Lord Curzon himself. In accordance with that principle, the selection of members should have been regulated "by a careful balance of the interests and merits, not merely of individuals but of provinces, races and even of creeds." In the selection of members of the Police Commission, it is evident there has been no such careful balancing of the interests and merits of individuals and of provinces and of races and creeds, as laid down by His Excellency. However that may be, I am quite sure there is no desire on the part of the educated community to add to the difficulties of the task which lies before the Commission by entering upon a criticism of its constitution. We desire to help the Commission, and I have no doubt your deliberations, conceived in a spirit of genuine friendliness and with a real desire to co-operate with the Commission, will be found useful by that body. The inefficiency of the Police is notorious. It is the weakest department of the Government, as the Post Office is the

strongest. How to render it more efficient, introduce into it a higher sense of purity and invest it with greater dignity so that to be a policeman would be regarded as a mark of social honour rather than of social stigma, is the problem, to which the country and Government have applied themselves for a solution. The problem is not one which is beyond the capacity of Anglo-Indian statesmanship, aided by the experience and knowledge of a sympathetic community. Similar problems have been dealt with in the past and satisfactorily solved. There was a time, at least in Bengal, when the Subordinate Executive and Judicial Services were not as remarkable for their efficiency or integrity as they now are. But the purity of the members of these Services and their ability and devotion now place them in the front rank among our public servants. They are an honour to themselves, to the country and the Services which they adorn. The Government of Bengal has recently recognized their worth and the quality of their services by a substantial increase of their emoluments and by the improvement of their status by the promotion of selected members to offices, reserved for the Imperial Civil Service. What has brought about this change—what was the secret of this marvellous transformation? The secret is easily learnt. It is not one of the abstruse mysteries of statesmanship. The improvement was brought about by the introduction into these Services of educated men—the products of our University, upon suitable pay and assured prospects. Follow the same principle in the reorganization of the Police, and the same results will follow. The reform will be expensive; but it must be faced with statesmanlike resolution. As the late Sir John Woodburn, whose death all Bengal mourns for his many good qualities of head and heart, said from his place in the Imperial Council, money is the crux of the whole question. The pay and prospects of the Police, especially of the investigating officers, the Sub-Inspectors and Inspectors, must be substantially improv-

ed. The supervision must be more effective. It is no exaggeration to say that the supervision now exercised by the class of officers, known as District Superintendents, is inadequate and ineffective, and the Police will continue to be open to the reproach of inefficiency, so long as the higher offices in the department are filled by Europeans, imperfectly acquainted with the language and the people and having an inadequate knowledge of law and procedure. So long as these conditions are in force, the superior officers must be pliant tools in the hands of their subordinates whom they are expected to guide and control. The subordinate police-officers, subject to little or no real supervision, wield the authority of their superiors, without any sense of their responsibilities. Far better it would be, if the office of District Superintendent was altogether abolished and the Magistrate made in reality as in name he is, the Head of the Police. Let him be relieved of his judicial work, and let him have one or two personal assistants for his Police Work. Thus a common measure of reform would add to the efficiency of of the Police and bring about the separation of judicial and executive functions. From the utterances of an influential Anglo-Indian newspaper I am inclined to believe that such a reform would commend itself to both Europeans and Indians. But if the office of District Superintendent is at all to be retained, let it not be the monopoly of the incapables of influential Anglo-Indian families—the haven of their rest. Detection of crime is the principal duty of the Police—and detection in the long run means prevention. The Indian Police is notoriously wanting in detective ability, owing mainly to the higher offices in the Police being manned by Europeans, imperfectly acquainted with the language and the habits of the people. For the efficiency of the Police, therefore, it is a matter of the first importance that there should be a substantial leaven of the Indian element in the higher ranks of the Police. But here again we have to repeat the old complaint of the monopoly of the governing

race and the exclusion of the children of the soil. In Bengal out of 80 District and Assistant Superintendents of Police, only 6 are natives of Bengal. For the whole of India, out of 471 Assistant and District Superintendents, only 25 are Indians and 446 are Europeans. This exclusion of our countrymen from the higher offices in the Police was never contemplated by the Public Service Commission who recommended that the recruitment for the grade of District Superintendent should be by—

(a) Limited competition amongst candidates selected in England for such portion of the appointments in each Province as the Government of India may decide to be necessary ;

(b) Limited competition amongst candidates selected in India, such candidates being carefully chosen on grounds of good physique, the knowledge of the vernacular languages prescribed for the Provincial Service, and high educational qualifications of an English kind.

(c) Promotion from the grade of Inspectors for exceptional merit and ability shown in active service.

(1) That both the competitive examinations referred to in the foregoing recommendation, should be conducted in accordance with rules approved by the Government of India ; and

(2) That appointments to Inspectorship should, as a rule, be made from the lower grades of the force, and that in no case should outsiders be appointed to Inspectorship merely as a training-ground for the higher offices.

From both the competitive examinations, the one in India and the other in London, natives of India are excluded, though the Public Service Commission made no recommendation to that effect. We have protested against this exclusion, but all in vain. It institutes an irritating racial distinction, in conflict with the terms of the Queen's Proclamation and the avowed policy of the British Government in India. We look forward to the abolition of this distinction as one of the fruits of the labours of the Police Commission. Let there be an open competitive examination for admission to the superior Police service, subject to such rules regulating intellectual, moral and physical qualifications as may be deemed necessary, but let us not be excluded from it, because forsooth we are Indians !



## BRITISH INDIANS IN NATAL.

I feel that this presidential address would not be complete, without a reference to the position of our countrymen in South Africa. They are fighting a noble battle for the removal of their disabilities in which they claim and are entitled in full measure to our sympathies. We had hoped that after their splendid behaviour in the South African War—they would be treated with that consideration and sympathy which would be the just reward of their distinguished services. On the eve of the Boer War, we were told by Lord Lansdowne, then Secretary of State for War, that one of the reasons of the War was the unjust treatment of British Indians by the Boer Republics. The war is over; the Indians manfully did their part; never was their loyalty or their self-sacrificing devotion more conspicuous; but their disabilities continue, and the generous recognition of their services seems to be a remote, if not an uncertain prospect. The inventory of their disabilities is a melancholy record, galling to their self-respect and unworthy of those who permit them. No Indian can enter the Orange River Colony, except as a domestic servant. In the Transvaal, he is treated as an outcaste, one whom society barely tolerates, and every circumstance of his life is so ordained by a beneficent administration that he is reminded at each state, in almost every function of his daily life, that he is the representative of an inferior race, and that on no account should he be oblivious of the artificial status, thus forced upon him by superior authority. He cannot by law walk on the footpaths or travel first or second class on the Railways. He must live in locations set apart for him, and must possess no property except in these locations. As if the measure of his degradation was not full, he must carry a pass, and finally in the spirit of the Curfew Regulations of William the Conqueror, he must not be out after 9 o'clock in the evening. Never was there a more complete code of sanitary and moral regulations than what the late Transvaal

Government devised for the benefit of British Indians. It has come to the British rulers of the Transvaal as a legacy ; and it is allowed to bolt the statute-book and sully the fair fame of British administration. The state of things in Natal is not much better. Nothing is more repugnant to the spirit of British laws or the genius of British institutions than irrigating distinctions, founded upon race or colour. Yet such distinctions are ruthlessly enforced against British Indians in Natal, under the colour of British laws administered by British officers. Indian youths are debarred from the Government schools in Natal. British Indians cannot enter Natal, unless they have a knowledge of one of the European languages. A recent measure imposes on the minor children of indentured Indians a tax of £ 3 per year, unless they return to India on the termination of their parents' indentures. It is useless to pile up the list. It is a goodly catalogue of disabilities ; and all Indians, be they coolies or be they Princes, are treated with the same impartial justice—the same status for all—the same disabilities operative in the case of all, working with the persistency and uniformity of the dispensations of nature. It is melancholy to have to reflect that the South African legislator should have so little knowledge of India and the circumstances of Indian life as to confound the coolie with the cultured Indian, the aboriginal inhabitant with the representative of a civilization, older than any which the memory of man can recall, and in comparison to which the civilization and culture of Europe are but of yesterday. But the darkest cloud has its silver lining. The firm attitude of the Secretary of State inspires us with the hope and the confidence that he will not permit the perpetuation of disabilities which he regards with strong disapproval and just indignation. The stoppage of the importation of Indian labour would seriously handicap the trade and industries of South Africa. Such a step is not lightly to be thought of ; nor is it to be regarded as being altogether beyond the domain of practical politics. A

supreme necessity may call for a supreme remedy. The Secretary of State is in the place of the Great Moghul, with powers and responsibilities far greater than ever belonged to the most illustrious of that race. The welfare of India and the honour of the Indian peoples are entrusted to his care and keeping, and I am sure he will not permit them to be treated as worse than helots, on a par with African sages, when, by the exercise of his undoubted constitutional authority, he can ensure to them a better and more considerate treatment. We also look forward to the very best results from Mr. Chamberlain's visit to South Africa, for as Mr. John Morley has truly observed that no one is more qualified by genius and temperament to reconcile conflicting interests, to heal the animosities engendered by racial strife and to lay broad and deep the foundations of a new political structure in South Africa, where equal rights and equal privileges shall be the heritage of all British Subjects.

#### THE CONGRESS—ITS MISSION.

To-day we begin our work for the 18th Session of the Congress. The mind is spontaneously carried back to the past—to the trials we have endured, the labours we have undergone, the disappointments we have suffered and the triumphs we have achieved. The time has not yet arrived for the final judgment, for the authoritative pronouncement of history, on the work of the Congress. We are yet in the midst of our journey, our long long journey, through the dreary wilderness, which is to carry us to the Promised Land. Many will not enter Canaan. Some choice spirits have already fallen in the grand march. Many more will yet fall before the journey is accomplished and the darkness of night gives place to the dawning of the new day. Some of us who cannot promise to ourselves length of days can only anticipate with the eye of hope and faith the blessings of the Promised Land. But the faith that is in us is strong and the hope that inspires us is proof against all disappointments—all reverses. We have an undying faith, as strong as ever

inspired a prophet or a priest, that the cause to which we are pledged, will, in the ordering of Providence, triumph over all difficulties, outlive all prejudices, leading us onward and upward, inspiring at each stage a loftier devotion, and developing a truer manhood, until the regenerated man claims and asserts his political franchise as at once his birth-right and the just tribute of his higher nature. For myself, I believe the Congress has a divine mission. It is a dispensation of Almighty God for the unification of our peoples and the permanence of British rule in India. Thus we are gathered together under the ægis of an organization, political in its character and in its scope, but drawing its strength and its inspiration from those ever-living fountains which flow from the footsteps of the throne of the Supreme. Shreekrishna—the divinely-inspired Shreekrishna—who has his shrine at Dwarika in the Province of Guzrat, in his memorable admonition to Arjuna on the battle-field of *Kurukshetra*, said *Karma* is *Dharma* (good deeds constitute religion). Is there a holier *Dharma*, a nobler religion, a diviner mandate than that which enjoins that our most sacred duty which has a paramouncy over all others, is the duty which we owe to the land of our birth.

What are trials—what are delays, what are disappointments—what is even the cankering worry of vexation in the presence of this consecrated task? They are the necessary incidents of the struggle in which we are engaged—the ordeal of fire through which we must pass—the purificatory stage which must qualify us for the rich blessings that are in store for us. They will strengthen our fibre, develop our manhood, ennoble our nature and call forth whatever is good and great in us. The chastening discipline of adverse circumstances is the necessary apprenticeship for the splendid heritage to which we aspire. We ought to thank God on our knees that the discipline is so mild—the sacrifice entailed so insignificant. Read the ensanguined pages of history—note the trail of blood and the hecatombs of mangled corpses, with all their attendant horror and desolation, which mark the line along which

victorious movements of reform have carcered their triumphant way. We live in happier times, under more fortunate circumstances, under the beneficent protection of a rule which affords the widest tolerance for the widest differences of opinion and evinces the deepest sympathy for all constitutional struggles for constitutional liberty. Yet we have our trials and our trials and our disappointments. The forces of reaction are now in the ascendant. The cause of progress has met with a temporary check. For the moment we have been worsted. For the moment we have lost ground. But we Congress-men never confess to a defeat. We bide our time in the firm conviction that the turn in the tide will come and the forces which make for progress will once again assert their undisputed supremacy.

#### THE NEW IMPERIALISM.

Imperialism blocks the way. Imperialism is now the prevailing creed. Imperialism has always been synonymous with autocracy—the rule of the despotic monarch or of the victorious general who has made his way to sovereign power. In ancient Rome, as in modern France, Imperialism meant the supersession of popular authority and the establishment of one-man authority. British Imperialism does not indeed imply the extinction of British democracy. It means self-government for Great Britain and her Colonies, autocracy for the rest of the British Empire. What its latent possibilities are it is impossible to say. Whether in its further developments, it will lead to the curtailment of democratic power is one of those secrets, hidden deep in the bosom of time, regarding which even the most confident predictions may prove futile. But all history bears record that the extension of territory and power over subject-races is fatal to popular Government. Let us not however speculate about the future. British Imperialism implies the closer union—the more intimate federation between the English-speaking subjects of His Majesty. We stand outside the pale of federation. We

are not admitted into this inner sanctuary of freedom. We are not permitted to enter the threshold of the Holy of Holies. We are privileged only to serve and to admire from a distance. As a part of the Empire, we sent out troops to South Africa, and they saved Natal. As a part of the Empire, we sent out troops of China, and our Indian soldiery planted the imperial standard on the walls of Peking. Our loyalty is admittedly so genuine, so deep and so intensely realistic that even the Secretary of State had no conception of it. All the same, we are not the children of the Empire, entitled to its great constitutional privileges. We are Uitlanders in the land of our birth, worse than helots in the British Colonies. Our countrymen in Natal, whose splendid behaviour during the late war was the subject of unstinted praise, are still exposed to a degrading treatment which is galling to their self-respect and discreditable to those who permit it. British Imperialism which is so sedulous in exalting British greatness is not equally sedulous in opening up to us the possibilities of our greatness. British Imperialism which seeks to draw closer the bonds of union between the mother-country and the Colonies has literally done nothing to cement the loyalty or deepen the gratitude of the Indian people. I would welcome an Imperialism which would draw us nearer to Britain by the ties of a common citizenship and which would enhance our self-respect, by making us feel that we are participators in the priceless heritage of British freedom. But we are as yet very far from this blessed consummation. In India Imperialism has accentuated the forces of reaction and has engendered a love of pomp and show which is apt to encourage extravagance and to withdraw attention from the graver issues of domestic reform. We are not therefore prepared to welcome the new Imperialism in the form and garb in which it appears to us. Mr. Gladstone's sound Liberalism, with its strenuous persistency in the matter of domestic reform, with its thorough recognition of England's grave responsibilities in relation to India, would be to us far more

acceptable than the Imperialism which indulges in expensive pageants, but which turns a deaf ear to the cry of the coolies in the tea-gardens of Assam, which often subordinates our interests to other interests and which relies for the justification of imperial rule upon the pomp and circumstances of imperial grandeur rather than upon the solid and enduring basis of truly imperial achievements.

#### A DESPONDING VIEW OF THE SITUATION.

I have no doubt that the new Imperialism is a passing phrenzy which the robust common sense of the English people will ere long discountenance and that it will soon pass away, like so many of the varying fashions of the hour. But whether that be so or not, we must be sleepless in our vigilance and unremitting in our efforts to stem the tide and roll it back. We have no reasons to be discouraged. The past ought to stimulate us and to stir us into new enthusiasm. Ours is a brilliant record. I claim for the Congress that it has never taken up a question which it has not brought within the range of practical politics. You took up the question of the separation of judicial and executive functions. The matter is awaiting consideration by the Government of India. You agitated for the reform of the Police. A Police Commission is now sitting to elaborate a scheme of Police reform. You insisted in season and out of season upon the wider employment of our countrymen in the public service. The Public Service Commission was appointed ; and though much remains to be done, the impetus you communicated to the movement will produce enduring results. Last but not least, your crowning triumph was the introduction of the representative principle into the Government of the country. But your moral achievements, though less palpable and obtrusive, are a yet more enduring monument of your public spirit and your self-sacrificing devotion. You have created a new spirit and have infused a new life into our people. You have brought together the varied and multitudinous races and

peoples of India upon the same common platform and have inspired them with a lofty sense of patriotism. You have established a new bond of sympathy among them and their leaders and have taught them the value of organized effort, with all the infinite possibilities of good attendant thereon.

Yet there are those who take a desponding view of the situation—who say that our methods are faulty, that we have wasted our time and our breath, or that at any rate the results achieved have not been commensurate to the sacrifices incurred or the efforts put forth. There are moments of despondency which cast their shadows over the noblest and most unselfish natures, when the spirit appalled at the sacrifices made shrinks back at the contemplation of the disproportioned achievement. In the anguish of disappointment, the question is asked—what is the good of persevering in methods and in sacrifices, when the outturn of them all is so insignificant? I confess I have nothing but respect for those who, with the utmost good-will for the Congress and ceaseless in their endeavours for the public weal, are sometimes apt to indulge in these sombre reflections. But I ask—has the time come for the final judgment? I ask—are the results inadequate? Even if they were—what are 20 years in the lifetime of a nation? The triumphs of liberty are not won in a day. Liberty is a jealous goddess, exacting in her worship and claiming from her votaries prolonged and assiduous devotion. Read history. Learn from it the inestimable lesson of patience and fortitude and the self-sacrificing devotion which a constitutional struggle for constitutional liberty involves. Need I impress these lessons upon a people who have presented to the world the noblest examples of these virtues? Every page of Indian history is resplendent with the touch of self-abnegation. In seasons of doubt and despair when darkness thickens upon us, when the journey before us seems to be long and weary and the soul sinks under the accumulating pressure of adverse circumstances, may we not turn for inspiration and guidance to those great teachers of our race—



those master-spirits—who, with their hearts aglow with the divine enthusiasm, triumphed over the failing spirit, faced disappointment and persecution with the serenity of a higher faith and lived to witness the complete realization of their ideals? Chaitanya and Nanak, Tukaram and Ram Das lift the mind high up to the sublimer eminence of the divine ideal. India of the past is rich in these examples. May we not hope for their successors in the India of the present, in the India of the Congress, in the India under British rule, with all the stirring influences of Western life and civilization? The responsibilities of the present, the hopes of the future, the glories of the past ought all to inspire us with the noblest enthusiasm to serve our country. Is there a land more worthy of service and sacrifice? Where is a land more interesting, more venerated in antiquity, more rich in historic traditions, in the wealth of religious, ethical and spiritual conceptions which have left an enduring impress on the civilization of mankind? India is the cradle of two religions. It is the holy land of the East. Here knowledge first lit her torch. Here, in the morning of the world, the Vedic Rishis sang those hymns which represent the first yearnings of infant humanity towards the divine ideal. Here was developed a literature and a language which still excites the admiration of mankind—a philosophy which pondered deep over the problems of life and evolved solutions which satisfied the highest yearnings of the loftiest minds. Here, man first essayed to solve the mystery of life, and the solution wrapped in the rich colours of the poetic imagination, and clothed with the deeper significance of a higher spiritual idea, bids fair, thanks to the genius of the greatest Hindoo scientist of the age, to be accepted by the world of science. From our shores went forth those missionaries who fired with apostolic fervour traversed the wilds of Asia and established the ascendancy of that faith which is the law and the religion of the nations of the far East. Japan is our spiritual pupil. China and Siberia and the islands of the Eastern Archipelago

turn with reverend eyes to the land where was born the prophet of their faith. Our pupils have out-distanced us ; and where are we, hesitating, doubting, calculating, casting up moral results to satisfy ourselves that our gains have been commensurate to our sacrifices. Such indeed has not been the royal road to political enfranchisement. The triumphs of liberty have not thus been won. Japan is an object-lesson which thrusts itself upon the view. Read her history ; note her wonderful self-sacrifice, her marvellous power of adaptation, her patience, her fortitude, her indomitable energy and persistency, and let the most ancient of Eastern nations derive inspiration and guidance from the youngest which has solved the riddle of Asiatic life and has harmonized the conservatism of the East with the progressive forces of the West.

#### OUR CONSTITUTIONAL STRUGGLE FOR CONSTITUTIONAL LIBERTY.

In the constitutional struggle in which we are engaged, we need the co-operation of Englishmen, the sympathies of civilized mankind. It is England which has created in us those political aspirations, the fruition of which we now claim. Our minds are steeped in the literature of the West. Our souls have been stirred by the great models of public virtue which the pages of English history so freely present. Where shall we find the like of them ? Their sobriety, their moderation, their lofty enthusiasm for the public good, their scrupulous regard for constitutional principles, even amid the fervour and heat of revolutionary agitation, place them in the front-rank of political leaders for all times and all countries. Englishmen must accept the consequences of their own policy—they must cheerfully face the results which are the outcome of their own beneficent administration. They must gratify the ambitions which they have roused and adapt their administration to the altered conditions which are of their own creation. They have taught us the principle of adaptation to the environments of our situation, and they must not

complain, if we, as their apt pupils, invite them to reduce to practice what they enforce by precept. We have no higher aspiration than that we should be admitted into the great confederacy of self-governing states, of which England is the august mother. We recognize that the journey towards the destined goal must necessarily be slow and that the blessed consummation can only be attained after prolonged preparation and laborious apprenticeship. But a beginning has to be made, and there seems to me no more suitable time for inaugurating this new departure, for commemorating the new epoch which is to mark the birth of an emancipated people than the commencement of the new reign. The Victorian epoch, memorable in its achievements, is still more memorable in the generous impulse to human freedom which it communicated in all parts of the world. We shared in full measure the beneficent influences of that epoch. Our disabilities were removed, our right were extended, higher ideals of Government were recognized and a loftier conception of imperial duty enforced. A succession of illustrious Viceroys imparted an impetus to this beneficent movement. To the new Sovereign, to whom on his Coronation we offer our respectful salutations, we appeal to commemorate his glorious reign by the still further expansion of those great traditions of government which have been consecrated by the example of his illustrious mother and which more than British arms have contributed to the solidarity of the British Empire. We have a special claim upon His Majesty's sympathetic consideration. The recollections of his Indian tour are to us a grateful memory. We know him. He knows us. His Majesty's feelings in relation to us are those of personal good-will. Our feelings in relation to him are those of *personal attachment and devotion, emphasized by the recollection of his general warmth, his truly kingly benignity, his royal condescension, his generous concern for all placed under his authority.* The words of the Proclamation are still ringing in our ears, consecrated by the breath of his illustrious

mother, our late Sovereign. We have His Majesty's assurance that he proposes to follow the traditions of his great mother, that the happiness of the Princes and the people of India would be to him matters of the highest concern and that he would endeavour to promote the general well-being of all classes of his Indian subjects and thus merit their loyalty and affection. We appeal to His Majesty to enthrone himself in the hearts of his people and to lay broad and deep the foundations of his Empire, by the practical recognition of the claims of the people of India to a just and adequate representation in the Government of their country, by the gradual extension to them of that system of Self-Government which has been the invariable accompaniment of British power and civilization and which, wherever it has been granted, has been the strongest bulwark of imperial rule and has evoked the affectionate gratitude of the people. Under the beneficent influences of self-Government, alien races, hostile to the British connection, have been transformed into loyal and devoted subjects of the Crown. We need no such transformation. We are already sufficiently loyal, sufficiently attached to the British connection. But we are anxious for the permanence of British rule—for our permanent incorporation into the great confederacy of the British Empire. The present system of Government necessarily represents a transition. All history proclaims the truth that autocratic power is devoid of the elements of permanence and that authority to be permanent must be planted deep in the affections of the people and derive its sustaining breath from the vitalizing springs of popular enthusiasm. *The voice of the people is the voice of God ; and the right divine to rule is based on the unchangeable foundations of the love, the gratitude, the devotion of a people, evoked by the consciousness that they share with their rulers the responsibilities of Government.* Despotism represents a stage of transition, the period of which should not be unnecessarily prolonged. But transition must give place to permanence. All signs point to the con-

clusion that the period of reconstruction has now arrived. The forces are there ; the materials are there ; they lie in shapeless masses. Where is the man of genius who will communicate to them the vital spark and transform them into a new and a higher and a grander organization, suited to our present requirements and fraught with the hopes of a higher life for us and a nobler era for British rule in India ? The statesmanship of Mr. Chamberlain, bent upon the work of reconstruction and consolidation in South Africa, will pale before the splendour of this crowning achievement. We plead for the permanence of British rule in India. We plead for the gradual reconstruction of that ancient and venerated system which has given to India, law and order and the elements of stable peace. We plead for justice and liberty—for equal rights and enlarged privileges—for our participation in the citizenship of the Empire ; and I am sure we do not plead in vain ; for the Empire, thus reconstituted and reorganized, will be stronger, nobler, richer, far in the love, the gratitude, the enthusiastic devotion of a happy and contented people, rejoicing in their indissoluble union with England and glorying in the rich promises of steady and uninterrupted progress towards their high destinies, under the protection and guidance of that great people, to whom in the counsels of Providence has been assigned the high mission and the consecrated task of disseminating among the nations of the earth, the great, the priceless, the inestimable blessing of constitutional liberty (loud and prolonged cheers).

## ON SOCIAL REFORM.

*January, 1903.*

Babu Surendra Nath Banerjea while moving the following Resolution at the Ahmedabad Social Conference that " this Conference is resolved that with a view to carry out the objects mentioned in the above Resolution each Provincial Reform Association should endeavour to raise a fund which

the Conference recommends should be called the Ranade Memorial fund in order to perpetuate the memory of the late Mr. Justice Mahadev Gobind Ranade M. A., C. I. E., for the very valuable and untiring services rendered by him to the cause of Social Reform in India," said :—

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,—I have been asked to move this particular resolution. I have always felt the deepest possible interest in the Social Conference movement. (Hear hear.) I confess that I have not been able to actively take part in the furtherance of its objects. Several circumstances of my life have compelled me to devote myself to the prosecution of the Political aims, purposes and aspirations (hear, hear), but I regard the Social and political movements as indissolubly linked together. (Hear hear) I regard them as being interdependent. (Hear hear) I will go further and say this that, I hold that political reform is impossible without social regeneration (hear, hear) and moral enfranchisement.

We must cleanse the temples of our homes and our hearths. We must purify and elevate the social and moral atmosphere before we can aspire to those political rights which it is the aim of the Congress to secure and promote. (Hear hear). It has always been my firm and steadfast conviction, and I have never hesitated to give expression to it and in my own humble way to reduce it to practice. (Hear, hear) I am not in favour of precipitate reform. (Hear hear) I call myself a Hindu (Hear hear) I am a Brahmin. (A voice 'oh') I hear a passionate expression of surprise (Laughter). I have not yet come to the end—to the climax. (A voice, "come then"—laughter) I am a Brahmin, a Brahmin of Brahmins at heart. I come from the highest class of Kulin Brahmins in Bengal (Hear, hear). And I venture to tell you that I have done nothing or said nothing to disenfranchise me from my Brahminical rights. (Hear, hear). In thoughts, in action, and in the prosecution of the purposes of my life, I am a Brahmin of Brahmins. (Hear hear). I am not disenfranchised of my rights. I therefore feel that, if

any reform is to be carried out it must be carried out upon the old lines (hear hear) in pursuance of the old principles. We must firmly take our stand upon the ancient foundations (hear hear) and look round the examples of our sires and imitate them.

And what are the Hindu custom and Hindu rights? Are they not the customs and rights which are imposed upon us by the wisdom of the age in which they were framed and formed? Has not the law of evolution been in force since then? Have we not progressed? Have we not advanced? Are we not always moving, whether forwards or backwards, whatever it may be? Is not motion a law of human nature and the law of laws? If so the custom of the past must be modified to suit the altered circumstances and environments, (hear, hear) of the present situation. Our fathers appreciated that principle thoroughly. When they were confronted with the militant forces of Buddhism, what did they do? They cajoled, they fraternised with the Buddhist, they took the principle from Budha; they installed Lord Budha as God Jagannath and in that way the extinction of Buddhism was brought about. (Hear, hear) There was the principle of adaptation, and if you wish to preserve the ancient system which has come to us as a heritage, I think that you must follow the principle of adaptation. (Hear, hear). Gentlemen, it seems to me that it is because I am in entire accord with the teachings and principles of Mr. Justice Ranade (Hear, hear) that I desire to be thoroughly associated with this resolution of to-day. He called himself a Hindu. He was a Hindu of Hindus and yet a foremost reformer of his time and of his age. (Hear, hear) Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Mr. Justice Ranade (Hear, hear) were Hindus and yet reformers.

Both were examples of the firmness of their conviction and that we must follow the principles of adaptation and that we must not discard the ancient system of our fathers. We must broaden the basis of Hinduism, we must elevate, we

must educate ourselves in our social and domestic life. I am glad you have proposed to move this proposition. I trust that having placed this resolution on record and having accepted it you will allow it to be a dead letter. So many resolutions have been framed for the purposes of commemorating the good and the great men, and what has become of those resolutions? Where are the funds, where are the memorials, where are the mementos, where are the remembrances of those great and distinguished men? Bear this in mind that to-day by the acceptance of this resolution you pledge yourselves to certain proceedings (hear, hear) and I hope and trust that you will feel the solemnity of the vow you take, and that you will do what lies in your power to give it force. I hope and trust that this memorial will be an accomplished fact and that before we meet next year (hear, hear.) You will have raised a suitable memorial to that great and distinguished man, great as he was in the field of social Reform and greater by far in exemplification of those social and domestic virtues which ought to be the heritage of our race for ages that have to come.

#### THE ANSWER.

#### TO THE STUDENTS' ADDRESS

*March, 1903.*

Babu Surendranath Banerjea began by saying that as the President had remarked it is the proudest day in my life—one of those moments when language failed to give adequate expression to the feeling of gratitude which the address has inspired. The value of the address is enhanced by the fact that I receive it at the hands of one, whose name would be inscribed in the imperishable scrolls of fame, who fought for the country and zealously worked for its regeneration. I am glad that the demonstration is due to the united efforts of Hindu, Christian and Mahomedan Students, and I hope that the union of Hindus and Mahomedans would be cemented by a deep love and affection for one another



bringing up the happy consummation of United India. I desire to thank them with all my heart for the address which they have presented to me and the kind sentiments which it contains. It has been the pride and the privilege of my life to enjoy in an unstinted measure, for a period of nearly 30 years, the love, the esteem and the affectionate regard of the student community, and I am happy to be able to add—not only of Bengal but of the entire Indian continent. Wherever I may be—whether at Amhedabad or at Puna or at Lahore or at Bankipur or Tangail or Dacca or the remote capital of Southern India—wherever I may be, the students flock to me and they welcome me with a sincerity of enthusiasm which is the most attractive trait in the character and temper of youth. I am at home with them whether among the people of Bombay or the Punjab or Madras or my own province. They have received me into the bosom of their families and I have enthroned them in my heart. Many years ago, when I had been passing through one of the most critical stages of my life, tempered by the affectionate devotion of the student, the late Mr. Philip Smith of the Oxford Mission who has been struck with the demonstration of sympathy in my favour asked me if I would explain to him the secret of the great influence which I exercised over the student community. My reply was prompt and immediate. I said that the secret was easily explained. It was not one of the abstruse mysteries which Nature or the rulers of men who imitated Nature in this respect would not reveal to the gaze of the vulgar. I said that I loved the students. I rejoice with them in their joys. I grieve with them in their sorrows. I am their friend in need ; their comforter in distress and they reciprocated that sentiment with generous enthusiasm, which did not lose its warmth because it came fresh from the fountains of youthful hearts. Love is the secret of all success in life. Love is the fountain of knowledge.

Love is the source of all true inspiration. Love illuminated the judgment, strengthens the vision of the seer. I wish you have some more of that love in the relations of daily life in India, love between the teachers and the taught, love between the rulers and the ruled. If you have teachers of the true type, inspired with the burning love of De Rózio or of a Peary Charan Sircar, possibly you should have been shared the drastic recommendations of the Universities Commission. Half the difficulties of education in this country arose from the unsympathetic relations between the teachers and the taught. I will not say that such relations are general ; but they did exist and the wonder was that those who made the revolutionary proposals affecting the educational system of this country, seemed to be in the enviable condition of blissful ignorance regarding them. You have referred to my political as well as my educational work. I may tell you that I attach much greater value to my educational than to my political work. Political work is more or less ephemeral, though none the less highly useful. Educational work has in it the elements of permanent utility. The political controversies of the present would all be forgotten though perhaps the memories of the principal actors would remain green. The political controversies of the present would be forgotten, except so far as they affected the public life and the political institutions of the future. Who remembers to-day the great controversies which had agitated the public men of England towards the close of the last century and placed them in sharply divided and opposing camps.

The genius of Pitt and Chatham, of Burke and Fox and Sheridan excited admiration and their immortal eloquence and their enunciation of far-reaching political truths and principles had rescued many a controversy from well-merited oblivion to which the inexorable judgment of history would have otherwise consigned them. Even the great French revolution would be a speck in the vast current of human

affairs rolling towards eternity but for the impulse to human liberty which it had imparted—for the new political truths which it had taught,—the old political errors it has exploded. In the domain of politics, its influence has been as permanent and far-reaching as that of Christianity in the domain of religion or morals. It is not therefore, for me to underestimate the value of political effort or the elevating influence which it exerts upon public conduct and morals. If self-sacrifice and devotion are the qualities which a constitutional struggle for constitutional liberty involves, then the interdependence between morals and politics was so clearly established that a political action is elevated to the region of a lofty moral obligation—to the region of moral obligations deriving their sanction from the divine mandate. All the same he attached the utmost importance to his educational work. "My Empire is not of this world" said the great Founder of Christianity. The empire of the teacher is an ever enduring empire which extends over the future. The teachers are the masters of the future. I cannot think of a nobler calling than theirs. Theirs was a heaven-appointed task—a sacred vocation—a divine mission. But how few realized their responsibilities or rose to the height of their mission? If the work of the present is to be perpetuated, it must be through those who are to be the citizens of the future.

"Suffer the little children to come unto me" said the illustrious Founder of Christianity. Jesus Christ appealed not to the callous and the hard-hearted but to the soft, the gentle and the impressionable, whose souls had not been hardened by the rough buffetings of life. To-day we admire the united German Empire. It is the embodiment of material power and greatness. It is the embodiment of a still higher hope of possibilities which has only been darkly foreshadowed. But the conception of German unity was first tremulously uttered by the quivering lips of German professors within the walls of German schools and colleges. The cry of the school boys was taken up by the public Press.

It entered the cabinets of ministers. It became the cry of whole people, and in the fulness of time it blossomed forth into a mighty reality. When Mazzini sought to popularise the great idea of united Italy, it was to the young men of Italy that he appealed. He formed the association of young Italy ; and they helped to popularize the idea and promote the great cause of Italian unity. Qualify yourselves for the responsibilities of the future. If you are to be the citizens of the morrow you must train yourselves in the duties of citizens. Your minds must be instinct with the spirit of progress. Progress is the Law of Nature and the dispensation of Divine Providence. It is the Law of life. While the world is moving faster and faster with the added impetus of the past, we alone cannot afford to stand still. We must either move forward or go backward. We can not remain where we are. Nature in the physical world abhors vacuum. Nature in the moral world abhors stagnation. I have the greatest respect for the institutions of my fathers, for those venerated institutions which heavy with age had afforded consolations to millions in the past and which would afford consolation to millions yet unborn. But if we wish to preserve them in the spirit of the past we must adapt them to modern requirements. Japan presented an object lesson to the people of India. Confronted with the militant forces of Europe, Japan learnt all that the West had to teach her and now she had asserted her place as the first of Asiatic nations and the ally of the greatest of European nations. Japan which in one sense was our spiritual pupil have taught us a lesson which we would do well to lay to heart. By all means let us venerate the institutions of our fathers but we must adapt them to modern requirements. Everything in this world grew changed. Life has growth. Are we alone to be subject to dead customs incapable of growth and modification, the customs that had been forced upon us during a period of decline and decadence? Are we not to modify them to suit our altered situation?

The one source of regret which I have felt now for some time is that I look in vain for workers to fill up the places of those who sooner or later must retire from the sphere of their activities. We are getting old though some of us might still retain the vigour of youth. Where are the men, I ask who would take up our work—who are qualifying themselves for that work? Your admiration for me would be as empty as the sounding vase or the tinkling cymbal, unless you carry on the work for which you applaud me. The highest purpose of education is not that you should earn money or create a name for yourselves—admirable as these purposes are—but you should qualify yourselves for the great duties of citizenship. I invite you to this solemn—this sanctified task, this noble aspiration—which would elevate your manhood, and qualify you for that higher political and moral life—which you and I are so anxious to enter upon and which would approximate the life of the India of the past to the needs and requirements of modern progress.

Once again I desire to thank you for the kind address. (Loud and prolonged cheers).

## TO THE STUDENTS OF BERHAMPUR.

*April 1903.*

Babu Surendra Nath Banerjea, in reply to the address, said :—Mr. Murphy, Maharaja Bahadur and gentlemen,—There are moments in the life time of a man when it is difficult for him to give adequate expression to the feelings which are predominant in his mind. I will say with absolute truth that one of those moments has now arrived for me. 'I have been deeply touched, Sir, by the kind, generous and for too flattering address which has been presented to me this morning. This is not indeed first address which I have received from the students

and I trust this will not be the last. I trust it will be the pride, the privilege, the prerogative of my life to continue to enjoy in an unstinted measure the love and the confidence of that great community with whose destinies I have inseparably linked my own. Close upon 30 years I have now been a teacher ; close upon 30 years, my relations with the students have been of the most pleasant character ; close upon 30 years I have served them with all the earnest devotion that I was capable of. And as long as life and strength endure, my energies will be dedicated to their service. And the students have repaid me with the tribute—the heart's tribute—of enthusiastic love and gratitude. They have been my constant, my devoted, friends in the most solemn moments of my life. Amid the darkness of the prison cell, the voice of the students rose high above the chorus of universal sympathy which was accorded to me, bidding me to be of good cheer.

I shall never forget—no, it is impossible to efface from the tablet of my memory the solemn, the impressive, the universal, the colossal character of that demonstration. Years have rolled away,—events are receding into distance,—yet the memory of the demonstration is as fresh to me as if it was held only yesterday. Those who were associated with that demonstration have none entered upon a period of vigorous maturity. Some of them are our prominent political leaders,—one of them is my distinguished friend, Babu Bhupendra Nath Bose, now a pillar of that great political movement with which we are associated and another is the pioneer of that industrial movement which is pregnant with promises of good to this hapless land and who is now united to me by the closest ties of domestic relationship. These are the men who are associated with that great movement. Sir, in the address which has been presented to me you refer to my labours in connection with the Universities Commission report. When the information regarding the recommendations of that Commission was placed at my

disposal, the information seemed to me so grave, so pregnant of evil that I felt it my duty to hasten to give it the widest publicity and to sound the alarming note of despair. That cry was taken up by the country and I will say this that I do not remember an agitation more intense, more universal, more far-reaching than the agitation which the report of the Universities Commission elicited. Men of opposite schools belonging to divergent creeds, men separated by the entire circle of thoughts and convictions, were brought together upon the same platform with a view to record their protest against the report of the Universities Commission. What was the secret of this marvellous combination? What was it that brought together men like Nawab Syed Amir Hossein and Mr. Pheroreshaw Mehta and united them by the ties of a common cause? Statesmanship may well feel staggered at the result, but statesmanship must find an answer. Lord Curzon has complained of the attitude of the educated community in regard to the Report of the Commission. Eighteen months ago, observed His Excellency, there was no cry more persistent than that of University reform. This is not good business, exclaimed the Viceroy. But the change cannot be ascribed to the perversity of human nature, or the fickleness of the human temper. If His Excellency will bring to bear upon the task, the resources of his gifted mind the mystery will soon disappear. Comparing great things with small, let us ask what was it that drove moderate reformers to the position of reactionaries on the occurrence of the French Revolution? The answer is easy. The express of the revolution filled them with alarm. They trembled for the cause of social order, and ranged themselves on the side of that extreme conservation which found such eloquent advocates in Burke and in La Maistre. It was very much the same which drove the sober, the pious, the high souled Tom More to the camp of the reactionaries who opposed the reformation. Revolutionary proposals do not help but re-

tard the cause of progress by raising a body of feeling in opposition to it. It is the revolutionary character of the proposals of the Commission that lies at the root of that tremendous agitation which was caused by the publication of their report.

We are orientals, Revolutions we abhor, Reforms, we welcome. Moderate-proposals of reform moving along the line of least resistance taking cognisance of existing conditions and circumstances would be welcomed by our people. But the Commissioners themselves admit that the effect of their recommendations would be to restrict the popular basis of education. Was it possible for the educated community to accept a report so disastrous to their best interests? Let it never be forgotten that, next to religion, education is a paramount consideration which appeals to the imagination of our people. Education is apart of our religion. Knowledge is the essence of godliness. The ignorant is an unknown person among us. Intellectually includes morality and spirituality in the conception of the Hindu. A blow aimed at education is thus a blow aimed at religion. It is this lurking but deep seated conviction which lay at the root of the universal opposition to the Report.

There is one recommendation of the Commission which most intimately concerns the students to which I desire to call attention. The Commission recommends that minimum scale of college-fees should be fixed by the Syndicate. The effect of it would be to raise the rate of fees and to deprive the deserving poor of the benefit of high education, which they have now received for a period of 50 years. In India, Sir, education has always been the heritage of the poor. Lakhmi and Saraswaty are at open war in this unhappy land, and if in these degraded days there is occasionally a combination between them, it is due to the topsyturviness which is caused by the Kali Juga. In the past, our greatest writers and thinkers were all sprung from the deserving poor. In modern times, the noblest products of English



education, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagore, Harish Chunder Mukerjee, Dwarka Nath Mittra, Kristodas Pal and many others, all belong to the same class. It is now proposed to close the doors of high education against men of this class?

It shall be very well to talk of the ideals presented by the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. But as was pointed out by the president of the Conference, the Maharaja of Natore, the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge are the outcome of social forces which have been operative, for centuries, in the bosom of English society. No such causes are at work in our midst. Further, our Universities are based upon the model of the London University, and they have had a growth of nearly half a century. It is now proposed to force upon them a model which is inconsistent with and may be foreign to their organism and the laws of their growth. I freely admit, there are many good features in the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, but wholesale imitation, regardless of the laws of our growth, must end in disaster.

Sir, you have been good enough to refer to the deep interest that I take in the spiritual and moral advancement of the students. I am indeed wedded to politics. Politics is my food, my raiment, the very vital air which I breathe. But all the same, I believe in my heart of hearts that there can be no political enfranchisement unless and until it is accompanied or preceded by moral and spiritual advancement. The mind, the spirit, the soul must be disenfranchised. Their fetters must be removed. The mind must be elevated to a higher level, to a nobler environment. Then and then only will free institutions become the heritage of our people. It has been remarked by a distinguished writer that a noble people cannot live under an ignoble Government, and that an ignoble people can hardly expect to have a noble Government. The Government of a country in the long run is very much what the people deserve. Let us by our moral and spiritual regeneration have been accomplished, no power on

earth will be able to withhold from us the just tribute of our higher and nobler nature.

One word I should like to say to the student community and it is this:—There is nothing for which I have more sincere respect than the great past of my country. I call myself a Hindu, I am a Hindu of Hindus. I am wedded to the great traditions of my ancestors. I venerate them. In the past, they have been a source of consolation to us; in the future they will be a source of consolation to our children and children's children. But, at the same time, bear in mind, that we are confronted with the militant forces of modern civilisation; that we must adapt ourselves to our surroundings and to the environments of our newly developed situation. Look at Japan. Japan is our pupil and Japan is now one of the greatest nations of the earth. You must adopt yourselves to your environments and all will be well with you.

One word more and I am done, you have referred to my political work. You say that I am the life and soul of the Congress movement. I am not prepared to accept this compliment. I put it down to the bias of personal friendship and devotion. There are distinguished colleagues, who for more than myself, deserve this compliment. I am a humble worker in the Congress cause. All that I can say of myself is that I yield to none in my love for and devotion to that sacred cause. I am a humble worker and that is all the praise that I can fairly lay claim to.

The terms in which you have been pleased to refer to my association with the Congress movement imply your approbation of my work in that connection. Students, we desire to leave that work to you as a legacy. You must qualify yourselves for that splendid bequest. It will be a moral qualification. You must pass through a period of moral apprenticeship. Cultivate truthfulness, cultivate the spirit of manly independence; cultivate hatred of wrong and oppression, whether perpetrated upon man in his indi-

vidual or in his collective capacity. Regenerate the inner man. Elevate your surroundings. Live in the atmosphere of the Gods, fragrant with the breath of celestials of mankind in those, divine heights, consecrated and illuminated by the presence of a Jesus, a Mahomed, a Budha and a Chaitanya. This is the message which I desire to communicate to you. Once again, let me thank you for the address which you have been so good as to present to me.

### MADRAS CONGRESS.

*December 1903.*

Mr. Surendranath Banerjee, who received a tremendous ovation then addressed the meeting. He said :—

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen :—It was the earnest wish of some of the members of the Subjects Committee that I should speak to this Resolution ; I did not see my way to comply with that request ; but now that the Heavens have descended, it seems necessary that I should, in my own humble way, come to the rescue of the situation. Mr. President and Brother Delegates, in this matter we take our stand upon the Queen's Proclamation, the Magna Charta of our rights and liberties. In that gracious Proclamation, we have these noble words : 'And it is our further will, that so far as may be, our subjects, of whatever race or creed, be freely admitted to all offices, the duties of which they are qualified by their ability, education and integrity to duly discharge.' Those are the gracious words of the solemn Proclamation, and Viceroy after Viceroy has declared that that Proclamation is the golden rule of his conduct. If so, what becomes of those iniquitous racial considerations imported into the distribution of public patronage throughout the length and breadth of this vast Empire ? Ladies and Gentlemen, the other day a Resolution was issued by the Government of Bengal—no doubt under superior inspiration—to the effect

that certain appointments in the Bengal Secretariat, carrying salaries of Rs. 200 and upwards, a month, should be reserved for Europeans and Eurasians. I protest against this reservation. In your name and on your behalf, and on behalf of the entire educated community of India, I desire to record my protest against it. Let not my position and that of the Congress be misunderstood. We welcome the domiciled Europeans and Eurasians into the fold of the public service. They are our brothers ; the country is theirs as well as ours ; they have made India their home and have identified themselves with its interests. Both they and we ought to protest against racial considerations being introduced into the public service. They and we ought to protest against the Queen's Proclamation being torn into tatters and scattered to the winds. That is our position with regard to this matter. And, gentlemen, who have the Resolution of the Secretary of State, to which my friend here has referred, namely the Resolution of 1879, and, under the terms of that Resolution, no appointment, excepting appointments in the Covenanted Civil Service, carrying salaries of Rs. 200 per mensem and upwards, can be conferred on any other person than a Statutory native of India except with the consent of the Government of India and the Secretary of State. But when, by this Resolution of the Government of Bengal, you reserve appointments for a particular class, you nullify the order of the Secretary of State. You only give up the direct frontal attack in deference to modern tactics and execute a dexterous flank movement. You profess to stand on the exalted platform of the Queen's Proclamation and proclaim it to be the golden rule of your conduct, while, by a side wind, you tear that Proclamation and introduce racial considerations into the distribution of public offices.

I hope and trust that from this Congress there will go forth a mighty protest against proceedings of this kind. We have lost ground : but our cause is one of righteousness and justice, and so long as the God of nations shapes the destinies

of communities and peoples, working in the path of righteousness, be confident that the day will come which will mark the ultimate triumph of equality and of equal principles even in this unhappy land of ours. (*Loud Cheers*).

## ON THE UNIVERSITIES BILL.

*December, 1903.*

Babu Surendranath Bannerjee in moving the resolution on the Universities Bill, said—

Mr. President, Brother Delegates and Gentlemen,—Last year when Congress assembled we recorded a protest against the Report of the Universities Commission. In that protest, we carried with us the sympathies and, I may add, the convictions of the entire educated community throughout India, irrespective of considerations of race or religion. Those who did not worship with us in the same temple—who did not profess the same political creed, but were separated from us by the widest of human barriers, *viz.*, those of thought and feeling readily joined us in this universal protest. We then made it clear, abundantly clear, to the rulers of India and all else whom it might concern that next to religion, education was our most cherished interest, that into that domain we could permit no trespass, none of the arts of poaching, and that we were resolved by all the constitutional means at our disposal to safeguard our educational interests and to transmit our educational legacy, untarnished and undiminished, to those who, coming after us, would bear our names and inherit our privileges as well as our obligations. The Government of Lord Curzon, whatever may be its demerits, and I, for one, have never been partial to them, has always been keenly responsive to the intimations of public opinion, and His Excellency recognizing the situation, issued a circular-letter which went far to allay the agitation and to re-assure the public mind. None the less we recorded a resolution formulating our objections to the main features of the Report of the Commission, for we felt that the controversy was not yet over

and that the authoritative protest of educated India, voiced through our great organ of the National Congress, would have a value and a significance all its own. We were wise in making that protest, for the danger is not yet over, and to-day we stand face to face with a Bill (the Universities Bill) which, if embodied in the law of the land would officialize our Universities and reduce them to so many departments of the Government. During the last thirty years no movement has been stronger. None has evoked in a more unstinted measure the approbation of public opinion than the movement of decentralization, the steady but gradual delegation of centralized authority to subordinate bodies, vested with full responsibility and working under the general supervision of the central power. The movement began with Lord Mayo. It received a new impetus from the statesmanlike measures of Lord Ripon's Government, and in actual operation it has been attended with results which justify an expansion rather than a curtailment of the beneficent policy which it embodies. And the movement has gone on expanding, affording infinite relief to the Central Government and scattering broadcast in its train the investimable blessing of the enlargement of popular authority. But all this is now to be changed. The civic freedom of our corporations is to be curtailed by the intervention of Government—and you, the citizens of Madras, have a foretaste of the rich blessing that is in store for you, in the Madras Municipal Bill—and our Universities are to be subjected to the persistent pressure of official control.

The Government has made no secret of its intentions in this respect. Sir Denzil Ibbetson, speaking in support of Mr. Raleigh's Bill, with a candour and directness of purpose which I greatly admire, for it is so rare in these days, when duplicity and diplomacy have become interchangeable terms observed that the Government must now assume control over the system of higher education. I should have thought that imperialism—the new fangled imperialism which has

darkened the prospects of human freedom in all parts of the world—would have rejoiced in a sort of general supervision over the repositories of delegated authority, and like the great orb of day would permit the subordinate planetary bodies to move in their respective spheres, content only to guide, to restrain and to control. But that is not to be. Imperialism must meddle—and shall I say muddle? For the officialization of at least one great corporation has been attended with results which have assumed the proportions of a grave public scandal and have shocked the conscience of the citizens of Calcutta, of at least that portion which have yet any conscience left to them. What then is the justification for this new departure, and the policy of the departure which is embodied in this Bill. Have our Universities been tried and found wanting? I will say *no* to this question, and I will ask you to say *no* when you have heard me. It is incumbent upon the framers of the Bill to make out their case. Have they discharged their responsibility—have they seriously attempted to discharge it? It will not do for them to point to a defect here—a failure there—and a break down elsewhere—or to urge that our University system does not come up to the requirements of an ideally perfect standard. They must carry their evidence much further than that. They must show that our system has so hopelessly broken down that no partial reform will avail, but that a complete and fundamental change is required to meet the exigencies of the situation—that the entire superstructure must be taken down and the ground cleared for the erection of an altogether new edifice. So far from there being any evidence in support of this view, whatever evidence there is points to a distinctly opposite conclusion. Our universities have a brilliant record associated with illustrious names of enduring fame. Mahadeo Gobind Kanade, Kashinath Trimbug Telang, Perozeshaw Merwanji Mehta, Gooroo Dass Bannerjea are honoured names (a voice—Surendranath Bannerjea) whose labours have shed a lustre upon the universities with which they have been con-

nected. With the life of our Universities is associated the development of that progressive movement which has changed the moral aspect of the country and finds expression in every phase of our national life. It is no exaggeration to say that our Universities are the seed-plots upon which and around which have grown up the National Congress, the Social Conference, indeed every movement, social, moral, and political which has marked the activities of the present generation.

It is our Universities and the beneficent influences which they have scattered broadcast, that have elevated the tone of the Indian Press and have made it a power for good. It is our Universities that have produced a distinguished galaxy of eminent men who have adorned morals and manners, have ennobled the literature of their country and have made it a rich vehicle for the expression of the highest purposes and the varied requirements of modern life. It is again our Universities which have supplied a body of distinguished public servants whose ability and integrity have been the theme of Universal admiration and have vindicated the capacity of our countrymen for high offices in the State. All these achievements have been accomplished by the Universities under their old constitution which it is now proposed to supersede. Lord Curzon stands forth as the champion of this Bill. I regret, all India regrets to see His Excellency in this position, for his culture, his genius, his fine imagination, the brilliancy of his rhetoric are all calculated to place him in the foremost rank of statesmen. I am sorry that His Excellency's name should go down to posterity indissolubly linked with a reactionary and retrograde measure which has been condemned by the unanimous opinion of educated India.

Those who will be most deeply affected by the measure have a right to be heard and have a right to urge that their views will be carefully considered and, so far as practicable, embodied, in the law of the land. Lord Curzon observes that the Government of India is overburdened with work and that



it is most anxious to decentralize authority, but that it feels itself compelled to come to the rescue of the Universities which, says His Excellency, are falling to pieces. With the utmost deference for His Excellency—and I can have no other feeling for the august representative of my sovereign—I ask where is the evidence in support of this view of the matter? I am free to admit that our Universities are capable of improvement. What human institution is there that is not? But I again ask where is the evidence to show that our Universities have developed a condition of chronic inefficiency which alone would justify the drastic and revolutionary Bill which has been introduced into the Supreme Council? I can find none. But the vision of the discontented B. A.'s who with an exaggerated notion of their own abilities infest the avenues to our public offices, disturbs the equanimity of the Hon'ble member in charge of the Bill.

It is a serious nuisance, says he, and it must be suppressed. With all respect to Mr. Raleigh I venture to submit that the problem which he set has before himself is an administrative rather than educational one—and that no reconstitution of the Senates and no improvement in the method of teaching or of the examinations will allay this discontent, but that the Government must set about the task in an altogether different fashion. Our B. A.'s find that after a successful academical career all the avenues of honourable employments are closed against them, that with the exception of certain specified departments they are excluded from the Indian Civil Services and from the higher appointments in the Minor Civil Services and that they are entitled only to the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table to the subordinate appointments which the European does not care to accept or which the Government does not care to bestow upon him. It is not in human nature to repress the ambitions which culture and enlightenment have roused in the human breast. Remove these barriers, give the B. A. full scope for the exercise of his talents and energies, and above all do not degrade

him by branding him with the humiliating badge of racial inferiority and then the race of discontented B.A's will become as extinct as the Dodo. Further the discontented B.A. has read Sir William Lee Warner's book which the Government has been at so much pains to patronize. In that book he has read the Queen's proclamation, the terms of which he has inwardly digested.

He has learnt from the gracious message that race is no qualification or disqualification for office in India, and he has been assured by more than one distinguished Viceroy that the proclamation has been the golden rule of their conduct. But when he finds the very widest divergence between profession and practice, between exalted principles and their actual application to the measures of Government the situation is such as is not calculated to add to the serenity of his temper.

I look in vain for a satisfactory statement of reasons for this Bill in the speech of the Hon'ble member who introduced it. What I find is not so much a vindication as a statement of the circumstances which led to the framing of the measure. Mr. Raleigh has told us that a body of distinguished educational experts met in Simla somewhere about 1901 that they were of opinion that there were serious defects in our University system which called for wisely-considered schemes of reform and they further agreed that the Senate must be reconstituted. We are not told what these serious defects were. We have a right to know the materials upon which their judgment was based, and we have a right to our own judgment upon these materials. We must know what their proceedings are before we are in a position to judge of them. But the Conference met in secret, deliberated in secret, resolved in secret and I presume dispersed in secret. The only ray of light that has been vouchsafed upon the situation is that which has been afforded by the preliminary speech of His Excellency the Viceroy, now supplemented by the observations of the Hon'ble Mr. Raleigh.

But if the authority of the educational conference is invoked in support of the Bill, we may on the otherside invoke with at least equal confidence the counter authority of the Senates of the Indian Universities who have condemned the provisions, which now find a place in the Bill, with unparalleled unanimity and emphasis. But it be said that the Senates were interested bodies and that dominated by the instinct of self-preservation they could not be expected to pronounce an impartial verdict upon issues which affected their very existence. The argument would be convincing enough, if it were not the case that in this matter the Senates re-echoed the public voice and were supported by the unanimous testimony of public opinion. The public cannot be expected to look at a consideration like this except from the standpoint of the public weal. A wisely-considered scheme of reform moving along the line of least resistance, harmonizing the spirit of progress, the public would cordially approve of. Reforms they would welcome. Revolutions they abhor. And what could be more revolutionary than that the Senates, should be thoroughly reconstituted by the Government, and that the bulk of their members should be relegated to the cold shade of neglect by being made Honorary Fellows who are to hibernate during the greater part of their Senatorial lives, to emerge only into a sort of flickering existence on the eve of an election for a member of Council and then like the fast-vanishing ghost of Hamlet's father to sink back into their doomed nonentity even before the crowing of the cock.

Sir, if I remember rightly, the agitation for reform of the University system was largely prompted by the desire to expand the Universities and invest them with the function of teaching. Provision has been made for the creation of University chairs, the appointment of lecturers and the inspection and supervision of affiliated colleges. I hope the teaching function of the Universities will be largely availed of, and that before long an advanced school of learning will be founded under University auspices at the capital of each

Province. But the question is one of ways and means and not of constitutional reform ; and I confess that I fail to see how the reconstitution of the senates will promote University teaching. The Government has indeed promised a sum of five lakhs of Rupees for the next four or five years but this money will be devoted to the granting of subsidies to such colleges as are not able to conform to the requirements of the new standard of efficiency.

You rightly observe in the Resolution that the effect of this Bill will be to officialize our Universities and reduce them to the status of so many departments of the Government. These views of the matter His Excellency the Viceroy has protested against with all the eloquence and fervour of which he is capable. But facts are facts, and they cannot be challenged by authority, however distinguished. Let us for a moment look at the facts and note the inference which they irresistibly suggest. The Government will appoint 80 per cent. and may appoint 90 per cent. of the members of the Senate. The Government will affiliate or disaffiliate. The Government will sanction, modify, add to and even make regulations in case of delay on behalf of senates. If this is not officializing the Senates, will the official sponsors of the Bill deign to explain what it means ? One of the professed objects of the Bill—by far the most important which the framers of the measure have in view—is the enlargement of the powers of the Senates and their consequent reconstitution, for, says the Government, the present Senates are unfit for these wider powers and ampler functions. But the Government really takes away with the one hand what it confers with the other. For all these powers are to be exercised subject to the approval of the Government. The Senates are to be merely so many conduit pipes—subordinate bodies who are to enquire, to report and submit their opinions, the final decision being reserved to the Government. Thus under the plea of expanding the power of the Senates, the Government monopolizes all autho-

city ; and yet we are told that one of the objects of the Bill is to bestow larger powers upon the Senates for the more important and responsible functions which are now to be entrusted to them.

If language was given to men to conceal their thoughts in, have we not here notable illustration of it? Again it is said that one of the objects of the Bill is to place the Universities under the Government of experts. But who are to be these experts? The bulk of them will be Government educational officers wedded to the policy and the traditions of the Government. Thus in placing the universities under the direction of experts, the screw of official control will have been all the more highly-fastened. Look again at that other provision of the Bill which discloses its drift, viz, to exalt official authority and to make it a predominant factor in the Government of the Universities. The fellowships are to be terminable, to be renewed at the option of the Government. To make the fellowships terminable in a body bulk of whose members are to be appointed by the Government, is to deal a death-blow at their independence ; for the members will be only too ready to please the authorities in order to obtain a renewal of their term of office. Mr. Raleigh is fully alive to this objection, but he tells in reply that in all the deliberative assemblies of the British Empire, the memberships are terminable. So they are, but he omits to notice a very important fact. These assemblies are entirely or in the main elective in their constitution. Even if fifty per cent. of the members were elected there would be little or no objection to terminable fellowships.

This brings me to the question of the elective element in the constitution of the Senates. We are thankful to the Government for the definite statutory recognition of the elective principle in the constitution of our Universities. But the concession represents a very small instalment of reform—almost a homœopathic dose—and its graciousness is very much minimized by the other provisions of the Bill. Our Univer-

sities are modelled upon that of London. The London University consists of 55 members, of whom only four are nominated by the king, the rest consisting of Fellows elected by different bodies. To say that our college professors with a leaven of our graduates are unfit to exercise the franchise to the extent I have suggested is to utter a calumny. Such a proposition would be in entire conflict with the spirit of the Bill, for if our College professors are fit to be our governors surely they are fit to elect half of those who are to govern the Universities.

I have tried to show that there is justification for this Bill. But this is a negative sort of argument which will not satisfy every body. I would go a step further and content that there are provisions in the Bill which, if accepted, would be positively mischievous and would be fatal to the interests of high education—you will remember that the Universities Commission had recommended the abolition of the second-grade colleges and the consequent restriction of the educational area. Now I have no hesitation in saying that the same object is sought to be attained by the Bill, though in somewhat roundabout way. The direct frontal attack has been given up I presume, in deference to modern tactics in favour of a dexterous flank movement which is all the more dangerous because it is insidious and unperceived. There are provisions in the Bill which will prevent the further growth of educational institutions under indigenous agency; there are provisions in the Bill which will wipe out of existence the colleges now managed and controlled by our countrymen. Let me ask you to consider the provisions of Section 21 of the Bill which lay down the conditions of affiliation. The applicant among other things, must satisfy the University authorities that suitable provision will be made for the residence of students and of the professors in or near the college, and further he must give financial guarantees so as to ensure the permanence of the College. Now I have hesitation in saying that in Bengal at any rate, private enterprise launched under

the most favourable conditions will not be in a position to comply with these requirements. The Government have a sort of idea that the private Colleges are very flourishing commercial concerns. I wish the Government would run some of them and discover for themselves how much money they are able to put into their pockets. They will find that instead of a balance, they will have a yearly-recurring deficit. I know something of the unaided colleges in Bengal. I have been connected with one of them which is now nearly of 25 years' standing. I have grown grey in the service of that College which, I venture to think, has been of some little help to the educational interests of my province, and I will say this, speaking from close familiarity and intimate knowledge, that we have enormous difficulties to face and overcome, that these difficulties are of yearly recurrence that our finances are our weakest point and that the provisions to which I have called attention will be the last straw on the camel's back. But then it will be said that if there is to be no further expansion of high educational institutions under private agency, there is the Government and there are the Missionary bodies which will come to the rescue of menaced interests of high education. If the past is any guide for the future, I fear we cannot expect much help from the Government or the Missionary bodies. For the last thirty years there has been no addition in Bengal to the Missionary Colleges although no patriotic Indian can forget the debt immense of endless gratitude which we owe to Missionary effort for the impetus which it gave to the cause of education and the magnificent Colleges which are now maintained by Missionary bodies.

What is true of the Missionary agency is true of the Government. There are 77 colleges affiliated to the Calcutta University of which only 11 are Government Colleges. Since 1878 no Government College has been founded or affiliated, save and except the Bethune College which is College for Hindu ladies and affiliated in 1888, Thus if the policy

of the past is to be maintained by the Government or the Missionary bodies, and we have seen no signs of any inclination to depart from it, the necessary effect of the provision for affiliation will be to prevent the further expansion of the educational area. Nay more, I fear its contraction will be inevitable—these provisions will bring about the abolition of most of the unaided Colleges in Bengal. By a subsequent section these provisions are made up applicable to all existing Colleges and the unaided Colleges, I fear, will collapse under their operation. Thus Sir, I think, I have conclusively shown that the effect of these provisions will be to prevent the further growth of institutions for high education, to restrict the educational area, to subvert the educational policy of the Government, to tear up the Education Despatch of 1854, and to scatter to the winds the recommendations of the Education Commission of 1882. If this is not revolution—if this is not a reactionary measure of the most pronounced type, I know not what these terms mean.

It is against this policy that we desire to record our most emphatic protest. It is for the abandonment of this policy that we would appeal to His Excellency the Viceroy. It is a policy which is inconsistent with the highest traditions of British rule—those traditions which have founded, built up and consolidated this vast imperial fabric. “We are not here” said one of the greatest of Englishmen, to whom we are indebted for the liberation of the Press—“We are not here,” said Sir Charles Metcalfe, in reply to the deputation that waited upon him on the emancipation of the Press, “merely to keep the peace, to collect the taxes and to make good the deficit. We are here for a higher and nobler purpose, viz., to pour into the East the knowledge, the culture and civilization of the West.” Nobly has England fulfilled her mission—herself imposed, her heaven-appointed mission. Nobly has she earned her reward in the awakened public spirit and the affectionate gratitude of a loyal and contented people. The



*dry bone in the open valley have become instinct with life* and all India is astir with the pulsations of new born impulse.

I ask—is it seriously proposed to recall the past, to ignore the lessons of the past and to roll back the tide of progress which has set in with such an irresistible rush? I can promise no hopes of success to those who would fain embark upon so desperate an undertaking. Time and her beneficent influences are arrayed against them. The writing on the wall—the inexorable decree of fate written with the pencil of Providence in the scrolls of light—is against them. Progress is the order of nature, the dispensation of divine Providence. Reaction is the exception which whets into renewed activity the sleeping forces of progress. It is the darkness of midnight which precedes the bursting of the new dawn when the gathering forces of progress sweep away the last relics of reaction in their onward and triumphant career. I desire to warn the rulers of India that they stand before the bar of history where all the pomp and the glitter and the circumstances of their proud position will avail them not, where their words will be critically examined and their measures as carefully judged—and that History will pronounce upon them her awful censure viz., that being charged by the most enlightened of modern nations with a mission of progress and philanthropy they became reactionaries in the field of practical statesmanship and that they sought to temper with the interests of high education and to restrict the scope of those beneficent influence which it has always been the assiduous endeavour of Anglo-Indian statesmanship to foster and to promote. I know not what answer they will give. They know their duty, and we know ours, which is to do all that lies in our power to safeguard the precious boon of high education. All our possibilities of progress are bound up with it. All our public movements derive from it their vital breath, their animating spirit, their sustaining influence. High education is the great heart, the mighty moving impulse of all our public activities. It affects and benefits even those

whom it does not touch, elevating the general tone of society generating a purer atmosphere of lofty ideals and high aspirations. Such a boon we cannot part with. Such a boon we cannot allow to be tampered with. Such a boon we cling to with fond devotion, promoted by a spirit akin to that of filial reverence. Next to religion, education is our most sacred interest. The feelings prompted by religion deepen our affectionate devotion to our educational concerns. The hymns of the Bhagabat Gita which delight, instruct and inspire derive and added inspiration when addressed to minds strung to the music of the higher emotions by the combined culture of the East and the West.

Therefore, let there go forth a great protest from this congress,—protest which I hope and trust will be emphasized by similar protests from other parts of the country. To-day we stand face to face with one of the gravest crises in our history. Are we to succumb to it, or play the part of men? If you sleep over the situation and indulge in cowardly inaction or if you weakly hesitate or falter then the heritage of the past will be undone, the interests of the present will be compromised, and as to the future you will have forfeited your claim to that precious boon of constitutional liberty for which you have, for the last twenty years, maintained so arduous a struggle and which under the blessings of Almighty Providence and the fostering care of British statesmanship of the future, if not of the present, you are bound to win and which when won will glorify the name of England in India and will consecrate a new bond of union between the two countries that shall be proof against the machinations of European powers and the fleeting vicissitudes of Eastern politics.

## THE PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE.

*July 1904.*

Babu Surendra Nath Banerjea said :—

To me, Sir, this is a very old question. I have

been associated with its advocacy since my first entry into public life some thirty years ago when some at least of those who are within the sound of my voice were perhaps not born. The question has come down to us as an inheritance from the past. It is associated with illustrious names. It is consecrated by the patriotic endeavours of many of our distinguished countrymen who have found an enduring place in the pages of Indian history—of men like Dadabhai Naoroji, Furdonzi Nowroji, of Hurrish Chunder Mukerjee and Kristo Das Pal. The controversy associated with this question has had many vicissitudes and is fairly symbolical of the varying tenour and temper of British rule in India of the eternal conflict between the forces of progress and of reaction contending for the mastery, which constitutes a permanent feature of the evolution of human affairs. Eleven years ago, it seemed as if we were within view of the promised land. Eleven years ago, on the 2nd of June 1893, the House of Commons affirmed the principle of simultaneous examinations in regard to the Indian Civil Services. Unfortunately for India, and it seems to me, Sir, that there is a malignant fate which hunts the fortunes of our country and snatches away the fruits of our labours at the moment of fruition, unfortunately for India, there was a Secretary of State at that time, filling the throne of the Great Moghul—a Tory of Tories masquerading in the guise of a Liberal,—who negatived the Resolution of the House by arming himself with a powerful body of local bureaucratic opinion which has always been opposed to Indian progress.

The high hopes which had been raised in the public mind in 1893 have all been dispelled, and we are now tasting to the very dregs the bitter cup of disappointment and despair. We are now passing through an acute stage of reaction—one of the most accute that has ever darkened our history and bids fair to wreck the achievements of the past and to blight the prospects of the future. Lord Ripon gave us Local Self-Government. Lord Dufferin gave us the Public Service Com-

mission and resolutely sought to grapple with the question of the wider employment of our people in the public service. Lord Lansdowne gave us reformed and expanded council, Lord Elgin gave us nothing; but he took away nothing. Lord Curzon has sought to deprive us of much of what has been given to us by the wisdom and sagacity of the statesmen of the past. The restriction of higher education and of the employment of our countrymen in the public service, the repression of local Self-Government, the muzzling of the Press, the Russianizing of the administration have been among the aims and objects of a policy which has created wide-spread alarm throughout the length and breadth of the land. Your resolution gives expression to this sense of alarm, at least as regards one particular aspect of the policy which is now in the ascendant. You rightly say that the country views with alarm the new departure in the policy of the Government regarding the employment of our countrymen in the public service. What are the main features of the new policy? It was for a long time in a state of incubation. Its germinal developpments were displayed in the secret—circulars, no longer secret, which were unearthed by the patriotic enterprise of the Sanjibany newspaper. It first saw the light in a pronounced form with its lineaments definitely marked out in the Budget speech of Lord Curzon, and it has subsequently been embodied in the Resolution of the Government of India. It now forms a part of the recognised policy of the Government.

What are its main features? They are two in number. In the first place, we are told that the Imperial Civil Service which is a *crops d'elite* must be manned chiefly by Europeans and in the second place the higher appointment in what are called the Scientific Departments, in what we call the minor Civil Departments must also be the monopoly of Europeans because, forsooth we are wanting in the requisite scientific training. In plain English, stripped of its rhetorical surplussage, the new policy means that we are to be hewers of wood

and drawers of water in the land of our birth—a position of degradation from which we are manfully struggling to emerge into a position, more comfortable to our growing sense of self-respect. I ask, could there be a graver insult or a more deliberate affront offered to the Indian people than to be told that we belong to an inferior race, and as such we are precluded from holding the more responsible offices under a civilized Government? We are forsooth an inferior people whose ancestors in the morning of the world founded a system of ethics and a system of religion which to this day excite the admiration of mankind. We are forsooth an inferior people seeing that when Europe was steeped in barbarism and ignorances, the founders of our race taught a language which is the theme of universal homage and founded a social system which despite the storm and the stress of thousands of years still endures—a living monument of the wisdom and sagacity of our sires. We are indeed an inferior race when there went forth from our shores those apostles of the new faith who brought two-thirds of the human race under the moral ascendancy of *Shakya Muni*. But is the indictment levelled against us based upon a substratum of facts. If it were, it would involve the gravest reflection on British rule. For, in the past—in pre-British times—here was no lack of statesmanship in India. The great men who were the members of Akbar's court and shared with him the burden of his imperial rule, Toder Mall and Beer Ball and Abul Fazal and others were the most distinguished statesmen of that or any other age.

Nana Furnavis could give points to many a European diplomatist. If we have now lost the capacity for administration and have forgotten the secret of the great art, the inference is irresistible that we have been emasculated under British rule and that all our manhood and our worth is gone. Is Lord Curzon prepared to plead guilty to this impeachment? But the impeachment is untrue in substance and in essence. Even in these depressing times when the opportunities for

administrative distinctions are so scanty, India has produced an array of distinguished statesmen of which any nation or country may well be proud. Sir Madava Row, Sir Saler Jung, Sir Dinker Rao, Sir Seshadri Iyer and last but not least Kānty Chunder Mookerjee have ennobled the brilliant record of Indian statesmanship.

But the new policy not only offers a deliberate insult to the vast Indian population but is entirely inconsistent with the terms of the Queen's Proclamation and the immemorial traditions of British rule in India. What are the words of that gracious Proclamation which we are told was the golden rule of Lord Curzon's conduct ? " And it is our further will that so far as may be our subjects, of whatever race or creed be freely admitted into all offices the duties of which they are qualified by their education, their ability and their integrity, duly to discharge." The Queen's Proclamation, however, was only a confirmation, and authoritative expansion of the immemorial policy of the British Government in India. The Charter Act of 1893 laid down,—“Be it further enacted that no native of the said territories nor any natural born subject of His Majesty resident therein shall, by reason of his religion, caste, colour or creed, or any of them be disabled from holding any office under the said company.” The Court of Directors in forwarding this statute communicated to their servants in India the interpretation they put upon it. “ There shall be no governing caste in India” they said “ whatever tests of qualification may be adopted race or religion shall not be of the number.” Our complaint is that the racial qualification is revived by the new policy. The Queen's Proclamation laid down that merit shall be the test of qualification and that educational qualification shall be the passport to high offices in India. Lord Curzon says race shall be the test of qualification (for race connotes moral qualities) and that educational qualifications cannot override racial disqualifications. We are told that Englishmen by reason of their race possess certain qualities, the qualities which fit them

for command, and that we not being *Englishmen*, do not possess them. Race is thus made the passport to high office ; and merit and educational qualifications are discarded. Professing to be friend of education, Lord Curzon would discard the educational test and abolish competitive examinations. You, Sir, (referring to Babu Tara Prasanna Mukerjee, the Chairman of the Reception Committee) in your admirable speech of welcome, to which as I listened my regret became keener that you did not come out oftener to guide and lead us and that you did not take your legitimate share of public work and assert your legitimate place in the public life of this province, you, Sir, strongly condemned the proposed abolition of the competitive test. Why should it be abolished? Has it been tried and found wanting? On the contrary the competitive test has given us a body of public servants whose ability and integrity are the theme of universal recognition. The system of competitive examination was the subject of very careful consideration by the Public Service Commission which was presided over by a Lieutenant-Governor who was no other than the late Sir Charles Aitchison, and comprised some of the most distinguished men of the day. This was their deliberate verdict. They said :—

“ For the purposes of recruitment of the Provincial Service, the Commission believes that in the view of varying circumstances and requirements of the several Provinces no uniform system applicable to all the Provinces can at present be recommended. But the evidence before the commission shows that in parts of the country where the general educational conditions are more advanced than elsewhere, especially in the presidencies of Madras and Bombay and the lower Provinces of Bengal, a system of open competition would give satisfaction to some important classes of the community and would meet objections that are justly felt to a system of nomination. Assuming that candidates for office have given evidence that they possess certain quali-

fications without which no person should be appointed to the Provincial Service at all, it is believed that amongst untried men no better guarantee will ordinarily be found for the proper performance of their duty than is supplied by the profession of educational attainments duly tested. The Commission accordingly recommends that a system of open competition among candidates should be adopted whenever the Government of India thinks it expedient. Where open competition is considered unsuitable the Commission is of opinion that a system of competition among candidates previously selected is preferable to a system of nomination provided that the number of candidates selected for each vacancy is sufficient to make the competition a real one."

The competitive test is in universal vogue. Wherever it has been tried, it has been successful. It is not perfect, but no human institution is. The achievements of Japan have filled the world with astonishment. What is the secret of that marvellous success? It is due to the efficiency of the army and the navy. And to what is the efficiency of the army and the navy due? A Japanese correspondent, a member of the Japanese Diet writing to the Bengalee observed that the efficiency of the army and the navy was due to the system of recruitment by which the best men were selected after an open competitive examination. But it is now proposed to abolish the competitive test in India, apparently for no other reason than because the scheme forms a part of the general policy for the discouragement of higher education. There is indeed a striking resemblance between Lord Curzon and Lord Lytton. Lord Lytton proposed to close the Indian Civil Service against native of India. Lord Curzon had declared that we are not qualified for the Indian Civil Service and proposes to abolish competitive test for Indian appointments. Shall we take it as the prelude to the declaration of a new policy, yet in store for us, that the competitive test is unsuitable in the case of Indians, and that our admission into the Indian Civil Service by compe-



tion be prohibited? Lord Lytton enacted the Vernacular Press Act. Lord Curzon has his Official Secrets Act. Lord Lytton despatched an army to Afganistan. We have the Tibet Expedition under Lord Curzon. Lord Lytton held the Delhi Assemblage. Lord Curzon's Delhi Durbar has thrown into the shade the pomp and splendour of the Delhi Assemblage. The verdict of history on Lyttons administration is that it was a failure. We know not what the historic pronounce will be on Lord Curzon's rule.

We ought not to prophesy: It is dangerous to prophesy. But if the verdict of contemporary opinion, instructed and enlightened, at all helps to shape the judgment of history, we know that Lord Curzon will share a niche in the temple of fame with the poet-viceroy of India. But it is useless to indulge in these anticipations. Let us withdraw from the prospective vision of the future to the grim reality of the present. The Imperial Civil Service is to be the monopoly of Europeans. The higher appointments in the minor Civil Services are also to be their monopoly, because forsooth we have not the requisite scientific training. Will anybody tell me what scientific training is required for service in the Opium Department, or the Postal Department, the Customs Department or the Police? One would imagine that not much scientific training was required for the opium-eater or the opium-maker either. Yet only one-fourth of the appointments in the Opium Department is open to us. That was introduced as an experiment twenty years ago. What was experiment in 1884 remains an experiment in 1904, notwithstanding the fact that the Indians employed in the higher offices in the Opium Department have discharged their duties in a manner creditable to, and beneficial to the public. Such is the liberality of our rulers in regard to the employment of our countrymen in higher offices of State. If scientific knowledge is required for the higher offices in the minor Department, lay down the tests; throw open the appointments to general competition, and if we do not succeed, we promise

we shall not complain. Make the tests as hard as you like—introduce physical qualifications, if you like—only let race be no qualification or disqualification.

The Government has presented to us a large array of figures. They well deserve our careful consideration; but they hardly support the contention of the Government. Within the last thirty years the country has progressed by leaps and bounds—the dry bones in the open valley have become instinct with life,—but I am constrained to say, even in the light of the figures which are before us, that the liberality of the Government in admitting the people into a share in the administration has not kept pace with the requirements of our progress or the exigencies of the situation. The figures begin from 1867 and come down to 1903, and they include all appointments carrying salaries of Rs. 75 a month and upwards. In 1867, the total number of appointments was 13,431. 28 per cent of these appointments were held by Europeans and Eurasians, and 72 by natives of India. Now let us compare the figures of 1897 with those of 1867. In 1897 the total number of appointments was 25,370. Europeans and Eurasians held 44 per cent of these appointments; Hindu and Mahomedans held 56 per cent. In other words, while the number of appointments had nearly doubled in the thirty years from between 1867 and 1897, our percentage of the appointments had gone down by a little less than one half. Our percentage in 1867 was 72, in 1897 it was 56. If the rate of 1867 had been maintained, it would have been over 90. Does this mean progress? Is it a monument of the increasing beneficence of our rulers? Let us come down to the year 1903, and here again, we see no signs of improvement, no visible proof of the growing liberality of the British Government. The total number of appointments in 1903 was 28,278. 44 per cent. of these appointments were held by Europeans and Indians and 56 per cent by Hindus and Mohamedans. In other words, while between 1897 and 1903 there was an increase in the total number of appoint-

ments, there was no increase in the percentage of appointments held by us. I am free to admit that there was a slight improvement in regard to the employment of our countrymen in the higher offices ; but the figures to which I shall presently call attention will show that the vast majority of these appointments were held by Europeans and that we were nowhere in the race. In 1867, as regards the higher appointments carrying salaries of Rs. 500 a month and upwards, 94 per cent. were held by Europeans and Eurasians and only 6 percent by Hindus and Mahomedans. In 1903 our percentage had somewhat improved—17 per cent. of these appointments were held by Hindus and Mahomedans and 84 by Europeans and Eurasians. The improvement was largely due to the recommendations of the Public Service Commission, the bulk of the appointments in the Provincial Service, (Judicial and Executive) being filled by Indians. But after all, 17 per cent. represents an insignificant fraction when we bear in mind that the country is ours, the money is ours, and that we form the bulk of the population. But the percentage dwindles as we go higher up. The total number of higher appointments in 1903 carrying salaries of Rs. 1,000 a month and upwards was 1447. Europeans and Eurasians filled 86 per cent. while Hindus and Mohamedans held only 14 per cent. of these appointments. It is true the figures for 1903 show an advance over those of 1897. In 1897, Hindus and Mohomedans held only 7 per cent. of these higher appointments (the total number being 1470) while Europeans and Eurasians held 93 per cent. But what a small and insignificant fraction is 14 per cent. of the whole, and this after a hundred and fifty years of British rule, with the Queen's Proclamation abolishing all racial distinction and the declarations of a succession of distinguished Viceroys, all holding that the Proclamation was solemn document binding upon their conscience and honour ? We are here, Sir, to vindicate the Proclamation and to safeguard it against any violation by those whose highest duty it is to carry out in spirit and in letter the mandate of their sovereign.

But these Government figures touch only the fringe of the question. There are Departments and circles of offices from which our countrymen are altogether excluded. We are not sufficiently trusted to be admitted into the higher offices in the Political Department, our countrymen are excluded from the commissioned ranks in the army. The bravest Indian soldier in these days cannot rise beyond the rank of a Subadar or Ressaldar Major, and he is subordinate to the youngest British Subaltern who might not have been born when the veteran won his spurs. Far different is the policy of some of the great European powers in Asia, between whose rule and that of Great Britain in India, Lord Curzon is so anxious to institute a comparison. Let me appeal to Sir Henry Lawrence, whom Lord Curzon will admit as being an authority entitled to some measure of respect. Writing so far back as in 1851, the hero of the Siege of Lucknow observed :—

“ If Asiatic and Europeans can obtain honourable position in the armies of Russia and France surely Indians, after a tried service of a century under England’s banner, are entitled to the same boon, nay justice.”

Such is our situation as dark and as gloomy as ever cast its shadows over our prospects in our not very cheerful annals. What is our duty ? Shall we sit idle and be lost in the contemplation of our hopeless situation, or shall we play the part of men ? I know what your decision will be. I have no doubts or misgivings in my mind. Let there go forth a universal protest from one end of the country to the other against the new policy of the Government. But what is the good ? The Government will not listen to us. Be it so. They may not listen to us now ; but the time will come when they must. A foreign Government, the Government of a minority consisting of a few hundred thousand people, swaying the destinies of millions, must respect the prayers of its subjects, if it wants permanence, if it wants that its

rule should be based broad and deep upon the loyalty and the gratitude of the people.

There was a time when popular opinion was respected in India. There will be a time when, in the prophetic words of Lord Ripon, popular opinion will become, even in this country the irresistible and the unresisted master of the Government. It is in our power by our labours and our self-sacrifice to hasten the advent of that day. Shall we grudge the labour or recoil from the sacrifice. How magnificent her reward in the competitions of nations. Like Japan send your young men to the occident to learn from the occident its science, its arts and its industries. Like Japan neglect not the grave political concerns nearer home. Our industrial regenerations must march apace with our political enfranchisement. Such has been the order of evolution in Japan. Such will be the order of evolution in India—the finger of Providence has so written on the wall its inexorable decree. Though our rulers may not listen to us, let us cry out all the same. Let us fill the air with our plaintive notes. Perhaps some faint echoes, some soft whispers may be wafted across seas and mountains and deserts to the land which once was the asylum of freedom, and may remind Englishmen of what is transpiring here. Let a common cry go forth from our million-throated people. Let a common grievance and a common pang knit them together in the bonds of an indissoluble union. The moral gain will be unspeakable; and when a nation is morally prepared for the full assumption of its political rights, there is no power on earth that can refuse it to them. So has Providence willed; and He has also willed that you too in the fullness of time, consecrated by the genius of universal self-sacrifice, will enter upon the rich possession of that priceless heritage of political liberties which follows, necessarily follows, in the train, of a regenerated humanity.

## TOWN HALL MEETING.

*In connexion with the Association for the Advancement of  
Scientific and Industrial Education in Bengal.*

*August, 1904.*

Babu Surendra Nath Banerjea, in supporting the Resolution said :—

I am sure we are all very grateful to the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Stephen for kindly consenting to preside on this occasion and allowing his name to be prominently associated with this movement. We need the sympathy and co-operation of all, of officials and of non-officials of the representatives of wealth as well as of culture, of high and low, of young and old, so that we may bring this movement to a prosperous and successful issue. There can be no question but that this movement has taken a firm grip of the national mind. It has evoked a measure of enthusiasm which has outstripped the most sanguine anticipations of its promoters. It seemed as if the national mind was wistfully looking about for some conception which would express its wants and embody its ideals and aspirations. This movement incarnates this conception and gives it a shape and form pregnant with possibilities of immense good of the country.

The truth is that our too literary and legal education, despite its brilliant results has afforded no adequate solution to the bread-problem and leaves untouched vast spheres of profit and usefulness which ought to be accessible to our countrymen. The bread-problem is the problem of problems and press for solution. The professions are crowded. The services cannot find employment for all of us. Agriculture will not save our country from the visitations of famine. Poverty and destitution stare us in the face, and yet ours was at one time the fabled land of wealth, "the gorgeous land" overflowing with milk and honey and the good things of this life.

Now she is one of the poorest countries in the world and

*there is none so poor as to do her obeisance. What is to be the solution ?* How are we to rescue ourselves from a position so fraught with the peril to the best interests of our country ? We should leave the beaten track of the professions and the services and organise a vast industrial movement which should place us in possession of that wealth which our mother-earth has long sheltered in her bosom and which under the mandate of Nature is our destined inheritance. We recognise the truth that science is the handmaid of the industries, that the two must march apace and that the industries must derive their form and shape from the controlling hand of science. The marvellous prosperity of Japan has filled the civilized world with astonishment. The secret is easily learnt. It is largely due to her admirable educational system in which scientific and technical instructions form such a prominent feature. Our Government has done great things for us and we are grateful to it for them, but it does us good to emerge out of the leading strings of Government guidance, and we can never forget the truth that nations by themselves are made. If this movement teaches us a lesson in self-help in a matter of such supreme concern as education, it will have a moral significance all its own, above and beyond the practical and immediate benefits which may be expected to accrue from it. From year to year, we send our youngmen to Japan to learn the arts and industries. When will India be the home of arts and the industries ? So she was in the days that are passed and gone, when her silks and muslins and her gold and silver wares attracted merchants from the most distant parts of the world to her historic marts.

Where are those times ? Are they gone never again to appear ? Shall we do nothing to recall them to life and to revive them under altered condition ? Or, are they to be painful reminiscences of our past greatness ? Should we not as practical men, derive from them the inspiration and guidance which they alone can impart ? Do they not proclaim the capabilities of our race and inspire us with hope and con-

fidence for the future? Do not the voices of our ancestors, wafted across the distant ages, whisper to our ears the solemn truth that as the past has been so the future might be, if only we will be true to ourselves. If this demonstration has any meaning or significance, if it is not to degenerate into a meaningless ceremony or an empty farce, it ought to inspire us with the determination to make the movement the success that it ought to be. Speeches and resolutions and public meetings are all good in their own way, but something more is needed. The Promethean spark of a burning enthusiasm is needed to galvanise them into life. Money is needed, devotion is needed. Those who have the time should give their time to this movement; those who have money should unloose their purse-strings in aid of it; and this movement, consecrated by the spirit of universal self-sacrifice, will in the ordinary course of providence, confer on our people those great blessings which an expectant community so energetically anticipate from it (Applause).

#### AT THE RAM MOHAN ROY ANNIVERSARY.

*October, 1904.*

Babu Surendra Nath Banerji said :—

Ladies and Gentlemen,—This day, seventy years ago, Raja Ram Mohan Roy died in the suburbs of British, in the beautiful mansion of Miss Castle, amid the tears and regrets of his English friends. In the estimation, however, of his own countrymen, he died an outcaste—our father would not eat or drink or associate with him—his very touch was pollution to them. To-day he is adored hero of our race—in-disputably the mightiest product of English education—the pioneer of all those public movements which have in them the promises—the rich promises—of an abundant harvest of good—to whom we offer the spontaneous tribute of our hearts leavened with the sad reflection that one so good, so true, so noble, should have been so dealt with. But that has always



been the way of humanity. We bite the hand that feeds us and spurn the good that contains in it the messages of our salvation. We torture and crucify the blessed redeemer of mankind. The chariot-wheel of human progress is smeared with the blood of our martyrs and is bedewed with the tears of their sufferings. Error revenges itself upon truth by persecution, and posterity makes amends by tears and penances. We are here to night assembled round the yet unextinguished ashes of Ram Mohan Roy not merely to atone for the errors of the past and perform a great act of national penance, but to derive from him the inspiration and guidance for our work in the future.

And never was such guidance more urgently needed. We are passing through the midnight of reaction. The sun has long set. We are far away from the bursting of the new dawn. Light, kindly light, admit the encircling gloom, to lead our weary foot-steps is what we need ; and to whom can we turn with greater confidence for such light and guidance than to the great oracle of our race—the fountain and source of all those impulses which have carried us so far, which will carry us still further and which in their own good time, will bring us to the destined goal, if only we are true to ourselves and our ideals ? The spirit of reaction is abroad, especially in the counsels of the Government. Pardon me, if I dwell at some length upon the political lessons, which the Roy's life enforces—for I am steeped in politics which is to me my food, my raiment, my sustaining breath. Our rulers seem to be staggered at their own handiwork. Canute-like, they would roll back the on-coming tide of progress. Canute-like, they are doomed to disappointment ; for the progress is the order of Nature the dispensation of Divine Providence, and even reaction helps the cause of progress by stimulating and strengthening those forces which make for progress. The darkest night is too often the precursor of the brightest dawn. Ram Mohan Roy lived and died at a time when the forces which brought about the first Reform Bill were in their full

operation. The spirit which had been evoked by the French Revolution, tempered and moderated by the subduing influence of time and the bitter lessons of experience, had penetrated into every part of Europe, and had created a yearning for rational and constitutional liberty, liberty not for this race or that race, not for the whiteman to the exclusion of the black—but for humanity in general—as a heritage which was meant for all and was to be participated by all. That debasing Imperialism which bodes no good to England or the world—for it is opposed to the fundamental moral law of the universal brotherhood of all mankind—had not yet come into vogue. The hearts of Englishmen were full of the generous spirit of freedom. It was this spirit which prompted the noble utterance of Macaulay on the occasion of the enactment of the Charter Act of 1833. The words of the speech are still ringing in my ears. They are instinct with prophetic inspiration. They should be inscribed on the portals of Government House in Calcutta. “It may be” said the great orator as if standing on the heights of a second sinai, “that the public mind of India may so expand under our system as to outgrow that system, that our subjects being trained in western education may crave for western institutions. I know not whether such a day will ever come ; but when it does come it will be the proudest in the annals of England.” That proud day has now arrived ; but unfortunately Englishmen, at any rate the majority of Englishmen in this country, so far from welcoming the advent of this day, would give worlds to recall the policy which has produced this splendid result. The India of to-day is not the India of the time of the Reform Bill. The spirit of the people has changed and has changed for the better. As to the spirit of our rulers what shall I say ? It has also changed and changed for the worse ; and that spirit operating through the institutions of the land, has placed us face to face with one of the greatest crises in our history. How shall we meet the crisis, how shall we avert it and once again instal the reign of problems ? That is the problem of problems.

*Amid the gathering difficulties of our situation, let us sit at the feet of Ram Mohan Roy and hold communion with his master spirit. The light breaks in upon us across the vista of years from him, who in this, as in other matters, has been to us the source of illumination and of inspiration. For, let it be remembered that Ram Mohan Roy was not only the founder of the Brahmo Somaj and the pioneer of all social reform in Bengal, but he is also the father of constitutional agitation in India. He started a newspaper—agitated, strenuously agitated—for the emancipation of the press and the abolition of *Sati*; he pressed for the separation of Judicial and Executive functions in the administration of criminal justice and protested against men who are too young, being appointed as members of the covenanted Civil Service. It is remarkable how he anticipated us in some of the great political problems which are the problems of to-day of which one at least remains unsolved. His problems were our problems—their range was perhaps less comprehensive—his methods are our methods. Shall we give them up? I say no. Have they been tried and found wanting? So far from their having failed, they have been attended with a very large measure of success. The triumphs of constitutional agitation are writ large on the pages of our history. The India of to-day is no more like the India of the time of Lord Ellenborough than the England of to-day is like the England of the time of Queen Anne. The dry bones in the open valley have become instinct with life. A new spirit is visible in the country. Call it uneasiness—call it unrest, call it by what name you please, there it is, palpitating in the heart of the nation. The whole of India has been brought on the same political platform and has been fired with a common sentiment of nationality. The bitternesses and the strifes of ages have been forgotten and a golden chain of love and sympathy unites us all. When Mr. Tilak is convicted and wrongly convicted as I think, the whole of India mourns over the event as a public misfortune. When he is prosecuted or perse-*

cuted shall I say—our hearts go forth in sympathy with him. When our countrymen of Maharashtra celebrate the Sivaji festival, we associate ourselves with them and in our heart of hearts, salute the great founder of Maharashtra Empire. What has brought about this spirit of nationality—this sense of unity among the Indian races? What magic spell was at work to create a transformation so complete, so pregnant, with potentialities? It is the work of the National Congress, which it is now the fashion in some quarters to criticise. And the Indian National Congress is the outcome of those constitutional methods which we have hitherto followed and which are associated with the honoured name of Ram Mohan Roy. If in the life-time of a generation, constitutional agitation had achieved this moral result and no more, it would be entitled to our grateful recognition. But it has done a great deal more. It has a splendid record of enduring achievements to its credit. It has focussed public opinion and has formulated the public demand. Is it not an advantage that our demands should be so formulated?

The Government knows what we want. We know what we want. Knowing what we want, we gain by concentration and prevent waste by dissipation. One by one, the justice of our demands has been recognised. Some of them have been already complied with. Others will be complied in their own good time. Local Self-Government has been granted; the Councils have been expanded, a stimulus has been imparted to the wider employment of our own people in the public service; the reform of the police and the separation of Judicial and Executive functions have been brought within the range of practical politics. True, we are passing through a period of acute reaction and some of our most serious interests are menaced. I have no desire to minimize the gravity of the crisis. But, I think we should do well if we had a little more faith in our cause and we had a little less of the spirit of criticism and a little more of the spirit of co-operation. It seem to me that the

more urgent the crisis, the most should be our strenuous efforts, and it would be folly to abandon those methods which has so far won for us the heritage of our rights. When the clouds lower and storm overtakes us, we do not throw our cars overboard and jump into the river for safety. We redouble our efforts and we gain the shore. Lord Curzon may say that he will not give us any political boons ; but he cannot bind his successors, nor can he restrain those forces which are slowly and silently but steadily and majestically, working in the bosom of society and which, under the mandate of a higher decree than that of the even the Viceroy of India, are surely making for progress and for the ultimate enfranchisement of the human race. But the Raja was not only the father of political agitation—his fame was even greater as a social and a religious reformer.

His activities were co-extensive with the entire range of our being. Everything that could conduce to our welfare, no matter to what department of human activity it belonged was the theme of his incessant efforts. For he recognised the truth that to improve man in one direction is to stimulate his improvement in all directions. In the matter of social reform sympathy for the women was the keynote of his creed. That too was the guiding principle of Vidyasagar's efforts. It was sympathy for women that led Ram Mohan Roy to agitate for the abolition of *Sati*. It was sympathy for women that led Vidyasagar to agitate for the re-marriage of Hindu widows. I am bound to say that the social reform movement in Bengal is going down—it is lacking in the force and fire of former days. Where is the apostle of social reform in Bengal, fired with the enthusiasm of a Vidyasagar, or a Kurson Das Mulji ? What is being done is done through the slow operation of time and her beneficent influences. No effort is made to energize the movement. I fear the falling off in this respect is largely due to the revival movement which has inspired us with a sort of belief that everything in our institutions is perfect and that we can do nothing better than

to keep them as they are. I yield to none in my veneration for the institutions of my native land and for that sacred edifice which has endured so long, which has afforded consolation to millions in the past and which is destined to afford consolation to millions yet unborn. But no ancient system can long endure without the necessary changes. A system without the means of change is without the means of conversation.

The founders of the great Hindu system if they were living now, would themselves be the foremost to advocate the necessary changes. A system must be adapted to its environments if it is to endure, otherwise, it is doomed, foredoomed to failure. Ram Mohan Roy's great effort was to make the Hindu system conform its environments. His work has not been accomplished, though his spirit endures; and I trust that spirit, in its own good time and operating under happier and more auspicious circumstances, will lead to a transformation of Hindu Society suited to the requirements of the age. I can conceive of no more solemn obligation resting upon our countrymen than that they should recognize the changed circumstances under which they live and adapt themselves to those circumstances. The world is marching apace. The trumpet call of progress is heard everywhere. Everywhere the march has begun. The Land of the Rising Sun has responded to the call. Even China is slowly waking up from the torpor of ages. Shall we alone remain stationary—the inhabitants of that great land which, in the morning of the world, held aloft the torch of civilization and gave to the nations of the Far East the faith which consoles and sustains them? Is the spirit of progress dead in us? It cannot be, for gathered round the ashes of our great dead, we derive from them the inspiration which will lead us on and the illumination which will guide our foot-steps. Sitting at the feet of Ram Mohan Roy, let us be imbued with his lofty spirit—his love of country, his devotion to truth, his enthusiasm for progress—let us be regenerated by the

touch of his great example, and we shall then have acquired the impulse which will carry us on and will help us to secure for ourselves a place among the progressive nations of the earth and to accomplish those high destinies which I fully believe are reserved for us in the decrees of Providence.

Reference has been made to the necessity of raising a statue in honour of the great Raja. I entirely sympathise with the idea. But, gentlemen, there is another duty which we owe to his memory. Is it right and proper that the earthly remains of the Raja should for ever rest in a foreign land and under a foreign sky? Should we make no effort to transfer those sacred remains to the land of his birth, where he lived and worked, and which he by his labours, has so glorified? Will not his ashes, resting in our midst, inspire us with a new enthusiasm to follow in his foot-step? It was the transfer of the remains of Napoleon Bonaparte from the Island of St. Helena to Paris which brought about the worship of the Napoleonic cult and the final restoration of the Imperial family to the throne of France.

Ladies and Gentlemen, let us set ourselves to this task, so that next year it may be possible for us to announce from here that the Raja sleeps with us and among his own people and that his consecrated remains are in our possession and under our care—a source of ever-living inspiration to us, now and for ever.

## BOMBAY CONGRESS.

*December, 1904.*

In moving the Resolution on Indians and the Public Service Babu Surendra Nath Banerjea said :—

*Sir, it seems 'extraordinary that at this time of day nearly hundred and fifty years after the birth of British rule in India, and the daily increasing contact between the East and the West with the light and cul-*

ture and knowledge pouring in a flood tide from all sides, with all the great Oriental nations vindicating the honour and the capacity of the Asiatic races on the battlefield, and the still higher regions of peaceful progress, it seems extraordinary that surrounded by these cheering prospects with these happy auguries of progress, we should be under the necessity—the painful necessity—of recording our protest, our national protest be it observed, for we are no longer a microscopic minority, against a policy which is calculated not only to put us back in the race of life, but is inconsistent with the great traditions of British rule in the East and with the honour of the English name in this country.

But, Sir, we have fallen upon evil times and upon evil tongues and we are by darkness and danger encompassed round. It may be, so strong are the forces of re-action that our voice may be like that of one crying in the wilderness, none heeding it and none responding to it, but all the same we have an obvious and plain duty to perform. We must cry out and cry loud and persistently until we make the air resound with our importunate voices, and until we have aroused the conscience of England to a sense of the great responsibility, which Englishmen owe to their vast dependency. (Hear hear.) Sir, the Resolution declares that the new policy as laid down by the Resolution of the Government of India, of the 24th May, 1904, is inconsistent with the Proclamation and the Charter Act. Hitherto the provisions of the Charter Act and of the Proclamation and pledges and promises contained in them, and made by the Sovereign and the Parliament of Great Britain, had not been eluded; they are directly challenged and openly repudiated. (Hear, hear.) *There is no such thing as standing still in the world of God's Providence. Moving is the universal law and the Government of India obeys that law.* Lord Curzon tells us that the Government of India does not stand still for a day; we quite accept that statement. The Government moves and moves, but to our misfortune it is always moving in the wrong direction. (Laughter). It moves



backward. (Renewed Laughter). What Lord Curzon calls progress we call retrogression (hear, hear). Never was there a more striking illustration of this backward movement than what is afforded by the principles and policies laid down in the Resolution of the Government of India of the 24th May, 1904. What is the fundamental feature of that resolution? Mark the day of that Resolution. It was the 24th of May 1904. By a bitter irony of fate, the day which used to be the day of universal rejoicing throughout the length and breadth of this country and is now-a-days of pious memory of the birth day of our late Queen—(hear, hear) was selected to be a day for the reversal of her beneficent policy and the cancellation of her gracious Charter (Cries of 'Shame'). I will not dwell further upon this coincidence than to observe that the act appears to us—Hindus and Mahomedans—(hear, hear) in the light of an act of sacrilege and an act almost amounting to an outrage upon the revered memory of one—whom we cherish with the most pious reverence and affection. (Hear, hear.)

Well, Sir, what are the principle features of the new Resolution? They are two. In the *first* place, the Imperial Civil Service which old-fashioned people like myself prefer to call the Covenanted Civil Service, but in these days everything is imperial (Laughter). We have an Imperial party. Imperialistic Liberals—(laughter)—Imperialistic service and we have also Imperial Anglo-Indians (laughter). Well, Sir, in the *first* place, the Imperial Civil Service is to form the *Corps d'elite* which under the new policy is to be practically the monopoly of Europeans. In the *second* place, the appointments outside the ranks of the Imperial Civil Service may be filled up by the people of the country, subject, however, to very important modifications, viz., that the higher appointments in what are called the minor departments are to form practically the monopoly also of the Europeans and Eurasians because forsooth, they are alleged to possess a requisite degree of knowledge, resourcefulness and capacity for initiative

which, it is alleged, constitute the heritage of the European races. (Laughter).

Sir, into the merits of this new policy I do not profess to enter at present. I am more concerned just now with pointing out that it is in striking contrast with the Proclamation and the Charter Act. Under the new policy race is the test of qualification. Under the old policy, merit was the test of qualification. (hear, hear). Race is now the connotation of the qualities which formerly used to be associated with a high standard of education, duly tested. Sir, the Proclamation and the Charter Act were levelled against the assumption of racial superiority. The Charter Act removed all the racial disabilities in declaring the eligibility of Indians to the offices in the State. The Proclamation carried this beneficent policy a stage further. Not content with a mere passive boon, the Proclamation conferred a positive privilege (hear, hear.) The Charter Act had removed the badge of our racial inferiority. The Proclamation declared and affirmed that merit was the test of qualification, irrespectively of all racial considerations, whatsoever (Hear, hear). The Proclamation thus affirmed and established the beneficent intention of the framers of the Charter Act which could not be expressed within the cast-iron formulae of a legislative enactment (Hear, hear.) Clause 87 of the Charter Act enacts that "no natives nor any natural-born subject shall by reason of religion, birth, descent or colour, or any of them be disqualified from holding any place under the said Company." What the Charter Act did was this—it removed the racial disabilities of the old Statute of George III. (cheers). It was the intention of the framers of the Charter Act that such a boon should be conferred. Lord Lansdowne said, from his place in the House of Lords, while commenting on the Charter Act that their Lordships would be remiss in the discharge of their duties to the people of Hindustan if they did not provide them with the amplest opportunities to develop their intellectual and moral faculties (Hear, hear.) The Court of Directors in forwarding this despatch to their servants in India declared their policy in emphatic terms. Statesmen like

Lord Lansdowne recognised the situation boldly declaring that "it is our further will that, so far as may be our subjects, of whatever race or creed, be freely, and impartially admitted to the offices in our service, the duties of which they are qualified by their education, their ability and their integrity duly to discharge." The Proclamation distinctly repeats the forward movements in that beneficent policy, which has found expression in the Charter Act, and which, I venture to hope, Sir, has done more than anything else to secure the gratitude and loyal attachment of the people of India to the British Rule (Cheers).

The Proclamation was issued on the first of November 1858, which is a Red-letter day in our history. I hope and trust that it may be a day of universal rejoicing and solemn celebration, if only we protest against that re-actionary policy which seeks to tear up the Proclamation and scatter to the winds its beneficent provisions. The Proclamation was not an instrument of impulsive generosity. It was a solemn and a deliberate act of the State, which received the assent of a long line of illustrious Viceroys (Hear, hear.) It was recalled at the Delhi assemblage and ratified by our sovereign, the King-Emperor—while he assumed the administration of this great empire (hear, hear) and it has been challenged by a high authority. It has been upheld by a higher authority. In the memorable words of Lord Ripon, the Proclamation is not a treaty and not a diplomatic instrument. It is obligatory upon those to whom it is addressed. But, Sir, it is now proposed to repudiate the Proclamation, not, I think, in so many words, but it is attempted to adopt a policy which is counter to the spirit of its beneficent intentions. Sir, I venture to say that there has been always a sinister and malignant influence in operation in the high councils of Government to interfere with the redemption of this gracious policy. I know that it is a very serious charge to bring against the Government of India, but, Sir, here we are in the temple of Truth and Honesty.

(hear). I am prepared to prove the charge to the hilt.

Lord Lytton, speaking from his place as the Chancellor of the University of Calcutta, not only said that the promises and pledges of the Queen made to the people of this country remained inadequately redeemed but went much further than that and in a secret document—it is no longer a secret (laughter)—said : “ We have broken to the heart the words of promise which we have uttered to the ear.” The Duke of Argyll, from his place in the house of Lords, said in 1869 : “ I must say that we have not fulfilled the duty of the promises and engagements which we have made.” But now for the first time, there is an open and avowed attempt made to repudiate the Proclamation by the substitution of this new policy. Lord Curzon has told us that the Proclamation is the golden rule of his conduct. Sir, I confess, that I find myself in a bewildering maze of difficulties. I try to reconcile his speech, I ask what becomes of this golden rule of his conduct in the light of the new policy to which I have just adverted ? What is the justification for the new policy ? Has the old policy been tried and found wanting ? So far from this being the case, it is admitted on all hands that the great experiment inaugurated by the Proclamation, which has now been tried for a period of 50 years, has been attended with a marvellous measure of success. (Hear, hear.) Lord Curzon has appended certain figures to this Resolution, of May last showing that there has been a steady expansion of the policy with regard to the employment of our countrymen in the public service. Sir, if the figures justify that inference, what is the irresistible conclusion to which you are driven, except that day by day you are getting more and more qualified for the high appointments under the British Rule ? If so, where is the justification for the reversal of this ancient policy ? I venture to say that Lord Curzon stands condemned out of his own mouth.

But, gentlemen, we have another ground, and a stronger ground of complaint, and I am sure it is one you will endorse with cordiality and enthusiasm. Why are we precluded from high offices and why has this ban and ostracism been placed upon

the whole community in respect of higher offices under the British rule ? Is it because we are the representatives of an inferior race ? Lord Curzon, from his place in the Imperial Council (I am quoting the substance of what he said) declared that by our environments, by our heritage and our ap-bringing we are unequal to the responsibility of high office under the British rule. I venture to say, Sir, that never was a deeper affront delivered to the people of India by the representative of the Sovereign. (Hear,hear). It is bad enough to repudiate the Proclamation, but it is adding insult to injury to cast a slur upon the people of this country. In your name and on your behalf, gentlemen, I desire to record my most emphatic protest against this assumption of our racial inferiority. (Cheers). Are Asiatics inferior to Europeans ? Let Japan answer. (Cheers). Are Indians inferior to Europeans ? Let Lord George Hamilton answer. (Loud Cheers). And Lord George Hamilton is not a friend of the people of this country. (Hear hear). Gentlemen, are we the representatives of an inferior race, we, who are the descendant of those who, in the modern world, while all Europe was steeped in superstition and ignorance, held aloft the torch of civilization ? Are we the representatives of an inferior race ? From whose shores forth went those missionaries who have converted two-thirds of the human race into moral superiority. Sir, this charge of inferiority will not stand examination for a moment. We may possibly have fallen from the high ideals of the past, but even in modern times our representatives have been fully equal to the responsibilities of the imperial rule (Hear, hear.) Has the instinct of statesmanship and capacity for command disappeared in the midst of the environments of the present situation ? (A Voice "No No"). If that was so, it would imply the greatest reflection upon the British rule. (Hear, hear). But happily we are spared that reflection and men like Sir Madhorao, Sir Dinker Rao, and Sir Salar Jang, Toder, Mull, Abul Fazl and others have illustrated the annals of the modern Indian statesmanship. The truth is that it is not that we are wanting

in character or capacity, but there is a deep-rooted suspicion in the minds of our rulers, that if the policy of the Proclamation were to be prosecuted and carried forward, later on a measure of political power would go into the hands of the Indians, which might imperil the interests of the empire. (Cries of "Shame.") Of course, it is a great shame. (Cheers.) This great and mischievous policy of distrust and suspicion has engendered the modern spirit of Imperialism, which bodes no good either to India or to England. (Hear, hear). Sir, if I have not already tired your patience (Cries of "No, no.") I should like to refer to a number of figures which I have got here. I think my friend the Hon. Mr. Gokhale is looking at me through his spectacles (laughter)—perhaps he means to make use of the figures later on in the Viceregal Council—it is not my privilege to be there, but I am addressing a higher constituency—(Loud and prolonged cheers) a constituency of the representatives of my country (loud applause). I venture to make use of these figures with a view to refute the claims which have been urged by Lord Curzon. On the strength of these figures Lord Curzon explains that the British Government has treated the Indians with the unexampled liberality in the matter of employment of the people of this country in the public services. On the strength of these figures he says, "Is it possible to conceive that our administration has been too generous to the Europeans and too grudging to the native element?" He has thrown down the gauntlet, which I take up on your behalf and I will be able to point out from the examination of these figures that they entirely refute his proposition and support our contention that the British rule has been too exclusive in the matter of employment of our countrymen in the higher branches of the public service (hear, hear). These figures embrace a period of thirty-six years from 1867 to 1903.

According to the statement of the Government of India, in 1867, there were 13,431 appointments carrying salaries of Rs. 75 a month and upwards. The Hindus and Mahomedans

occupied 72 p. c. of these appointments, while Europeans and Eurasians filled 28 p. c. In 1897, the total number of appointments came to 25,370, that is nearly double of what it had been in 1867 and our percentage was 56 (Cries of 'Shame') while the percentage of Europeans and Eurasians was 44 ! Mark, in 1867 our percentage was 72 and in 1897 it was 56 ! (Cries of "Shame.") That is to say, while the number of appointments had nearly doubled itself, our percentage had nearly gone down by one-half ! (Loud cries of "Shame.") This is the illustration of the "unexampled liberality" of the British Government ! (Loud cries of "Shame.") Our percentage ought to have been in 1897, if the percentage of 1867 had been kept up, 92 instead of 56. But let us proceed. Let us come down to the year 1903, when we find the total number of appointments to be 28,278, that is to say, nearly 3,000 more appointments than were in 1897, and what have we for our percentage, for that is the crucial point ? Our percentage was 56, that is to say, while in 1903 the number of appointments had increased by 3,000, our percentage remained the same, (shame) that is to say, as regards the entire number of appointments, our percentage had gone down ! (Cries of "Shame.") We are, therefore, driven to the irresistible conclusion that, as the number of appointments increased from 1867 to 1897 and from 1897 to 1903, our percentage went down step by step as an illustration of the "unexampled liberality of the British Government" ! (Ironical laughter.) I have not done yet. (Renewed laughter.) The higher you mount the lower becomes the percentage ! Our percentage as regards the total number of appointments of Rs. 75 and upwards in 1903 was 56. Now take the appointments carrying salaries of Rs. 1000 and upwards. The percentage in 1893 was 14 out of the total number, while the percentage was 17 out of the total number of appointments carrying salaries of Rs. 500 and upwards ! I have just now said that the higher you mount, the percentage becomes lower and lower. The ~~it~~ is that only 14 or 17 per cent. of the higher appoint-

ments fall to our lot, (shame), although the country is ours; the money is ours, and the bulk of the population is ours. (Hear, hear.) Sir, this, of course, touches only the fringe of the whole question. (Hear, hear,) There are whole departments of the higher offices from which our countrymen are entirely excluded. (Shame.) I should like to know how many Indians occupy responsible positions in the Political Departments? (A voice; "Not one.") I should like to know how many Indians there are who are occupying Commissioned ranks in the Army? (A voice: "Of course, none.") The native has, in these days, to be content with only a "Subadarship" or a "Resaldarship" (cries of "Shame,") and is subordinate to the youngest European Subaltern, who possibly was not born when the veteran won his spurs. (Loud applause.) Lord Curzon challenged comparison between the British Government and other Governments in respect of the matter of employment of their subjects in the higher offices of the State by searching through history from the time of the Romans. He said: "You will not find such examples." Well, Sir, I fear Lord Curzon has been indulging in a little romance. (Hear, hear and laughter.) The Government of India is omnipotent and can do a great many things but it cannot convert facts into fictions. (Hear, hear.) Lord Curzon appeals to History and to some unearthed traditions, and he appeals to them with unhesitating confidence; but let History be our judge and our arbiter in this controversy. Gibbon in his "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" says that the grandsons of those who fought against Caesar became captains of the Roman legions—(Hear, hear)—and Governors of the Roman Provinces. (Hear, hear.) Markham in his "History of British India" says that the grandsons of those who fought against Baber at Paniput became Commanders, Governors and confidential advisers of their Sovereign. (Cheers.) Raja Man. Singh, who carried the Mogul standard from the Punjab on the East to Cabul on the West, became a Hindu Governor of a Mahomedan province in the heart of a fana-



tical Mahomedan population! (Hear, hear.) Where is the parallel of such a process in the British Indian History? Where is the Indian Governor of a British province? (Hear, hear.) Where is the Indian Commander of a British Division? Where is the Indian adviser of a British Viceroy and a member of his Executive Council? We have had Honorary Captains and Colonels at any rate—(Laughter)—Honorary Councillors and Captains, but they were Councillors and Captains who never counselled nor commanded. (Hear, hear and laughter.) It was an awkward diplomatic fiction in which Lord Curzon has deluded himself in indulging, in saying things which might look well in the mediæval times. Look at the neighbouring nation which is more Asiatic than European and which is not known for the liberality of its administration. Rudyard Kipling was right when he said that Russia appears more to be the Western boundary of Asia than the Eastern boundary of Europe. There can be no comparison between the Russian and British rules. In spite of culture, freedom and higher ideals of the British Government, I am bound to say in justice to the Russian Government, that that Government, in the matter of trusting its Asiatic subjects and associating them with the Government of the country, is distinctly more liberal than the British Government. (Hear, hear.) You may be surprised at that statement, and if it rested upon my own authority I would not make it. (Laughter.) But it is what Sir Henry Lawrence said—the hero of Lucknow who died doing his duty in the seige of Lucknow in 1857.—“If Asiatics and Europeans can obtain honourable positions in the armies of Russia and France, surely Indians, after a tried service of a century under England’s banner, are entitled to the same boon, nay justice.” That state of things remains unaltered. Well, Sir, if we compare the administration of the Philippine Isles with the administration of India by the British Government, what becomes of Lord Curzon’s boast? The Philippine Isles came under the American rule only the other day, and

yet they have now obtained constitutional government! There are a House of Commons and a House of Peers. The House of Commons is entirely elected, while as regards the House of Peers, three-eighths of it consists of the natives of the country! (Hear, hear.) You have in one of your resolutions a prayer to the effect that the natives of India may be appointed members of the Executive Council of the Viceroy. The American Government have already solved the question! In the very first Council of the Philippine Islands there were three Philippine members of the Executive Council! (Hear, hear.) Is it necessary to prolong this controversy any longer? We should rejoice if we could possibly re-echo the sentiments of Lord Curzon, but great as our loyalty is to the Throne, our allegiance to Truth is much greater, (hear, hear), and we are anxious, above all things, that there should be no delusion in the minds of the British Government as regards the administration of this country, and that we should not be led away by specious plausibilities of brilliant rhetoric. (Hear, hear!) Sir, this is a very old question. It is associated with the illustrious names and with the high endeavours of some of our greatest men (Hear, hear.) Eleven years ago it seemed as if we were within a measurable distance of victory, for, then the House of Commons, under the leadership of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, (hear, hear), formed the principle of Simultaneous Examinations in regard to the Indian Civil Service. But we were doomed to a bitter disappointment. The then Secretary of State with the Imperialistic Liberals, which, I think, is only another name for a Tory in disguise (laughter) negatived this resolution by fortifying himself with a body of local bureaucratic opinion, although in the archives of his office at that time there was a resolution of the Committee of his own Council, dated as far back as 1861, which declared that unless the Simultaneous Examinations were granted, the Queen's Proclamation must remain unredeemed. Sir, at the present moment, the hopes and visions of 1833 have been dispelled. We are passing through a terrible and acute

crisis, one of the very worst in our annals. For, if Lord Curzon would not give us more, why should he take away that which we have? (Hear, hear.) True statesmanship places reliance upon the loyal attachment of the people to the British Crown. (Hear, hear.)

Gentlemen, we hear a great deal in these days about efficient administration. I yield to none in my appreciation of efficient administration. (Cheers.) But it has never occurred to the faddists, who speak of efficient administration, that the efficient administration cannot exist without the willing co-operation of the people concerned. (Hear, hear.) The Russian Government have made this discovery after a long and bitter humiliation, and the Czar has called into being a policy which, it is to be hoped, will liberalize the Russian institutions. (Hear, hear.) Sir, in this matter we take our stand upon the Proclamation which is our watch-word and our battle-cry. (Cheers.) The gracious words of the Proclamation are inscribed on our banner (hear, hear) which we hold aloft. (Cheers.) It is the symbol of our unity. (Cheers.) It is the bond of our solemn league. (Cheers.) We desire to tell our rulers in all humility and with the utmost emphasis that we will not allow them to repudiate the Proclamation and to discard the gracious message which is given to us from the footsteps of the Throne and which is sanctified by the memory of one of the greatest Sovereigns of the modern times. (Hear, hear.) We are resolved to use all the constitutional means at our disposal to safeguard the Proclamation. (Hear, hear.) We fully realize the gravity of the task which we have imposed upon ourselves. (Hear, hear.) We recognise the political situation and the political prospects, and we recognise the fact that the forces of re-action are now in the ascendant. But what is more, we are confident of success (hear, hear), and in this hopeful anticipation, Sir, we have been greatly encouraged by the proceedings of that Banquet which was given in your honour—(Hear, hear)—and in honour of our friend, Sir William Wedderburn. (Hear, hear.) Sir

the fact of there being so many Englishmen and leaders of public opinion upon a common platform linked by the hand of sympathy towards the Indian people was an achievement memorable of its kind and augurs well for the success of our cause. (Hear, hear.) It augurs well for the success of the cause such as ours which is so moderate, so just and so patriotic in its aims and aspirations. (Hear, hear.) The outlook may be gloomy and the clouds may frown upon us, but I venture to think that there will dawn a bright era—(Hear, hear)—when the provisions of the Queen's Proclamation will stand redeemed and upheld—(Cheers)—and when the policy of trust and confidence will supersede the policy of mistrust and suspicion (hear, hear), a policy in which Englishmen and Indians will combine together for the glory of England's great dependency in the East. (Hear, hear.) I venture to look forward to the advent of that day. (Cheers.) You and I may not witness that day. Our eyes are now growing dim with age, we may not witness that day, but let us each try in his own way according to his opportunities, according to his lights and according to the measure of his capacity to bring about this glorious consummation. (Hear, hear.) Let us be animated by great hope and great faith, and we shall be able to overcome all obstacles and to surmount all reactions (hear, hear), and great as our cause is, God willing, it will triumph in the end. (Loud and ringing cheers.)

MAHARSHI DEVENDRANATH TAGORE

MEMORIAL MEETING.

TOWN HALL, CALCUTTA.

*March 1905.*

The first Resolution, runs thus, "That this meeting desires to express its profound sorrow at the death of Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, one of the most revered and trusted leaders of the Indian Community; and also desires to record its sense of deep regret at the great loss the country

has sustained by his death, as well as its appreciation of the spiritual genius of the late Maharshi ; and the services he rendered to the country in various spheres of life by his unflinching devotion and the way in which he devoted the powers of his cultured mind to the moral and general advancement of his countrymen : ”

It was moved by Sir Gurudas Banerjee Kt., M. A. D. L., and seconded by the Hon'ble Mr. K. G. Gupta. In supporting the Resolution Babu Surendra Nath Banerjee said :—

We are met here to-night to discharge a solemn public function, in which the community associate themselves with the family to mourn the loss of one who, beloved as dear relative, is held in even deeper reverence and affection as a great and illustrious public benefactor. Maharshi Devendranath Tagore was not only the patriarch of the Tagores of Calcutta, who form such an important factor in the public life of this city and province, but he was in a far wider sense the patriarch of the entire Indian Community—loved, respected, one may say adored, for his personal worth and his public virtues and for his enduring services to the cause of the spiritual and moral elevation of his countrymen, and to me, Sir, not the least conspicuous of these series lay in the example that he presented of a bright, noble, spotless life—a life that was led for the attainment of the highest ideals, in an atmosphere serene with the stillness of heaven and fragrant with the breath of the gods, in constant communion with his maker, realizing his visible presence, living in spirit with Him and shedding near and afar his benignant influence—it was a life whose heavenly career might be said to have begun even before he had tasted of death. Search at all points of the compass—go North, South, East and West—travel to Europe if you please, where will you find his like as an example of veracity in the highest sense—living for the truth, rejoicing in the truth, absorbed in the contemplation of the truth, streaming from all sides into his beatific vision, and eventually finding his rest in the God of truth. Standing by the yet unextin-

guished ashes of the great *Maharshi*—Oh, may they glow for ever, warm our hearts and illumine our understandings—standing by his yet burning funeral pyre, may we not regard with contempt the charge, I will not say of unverity but of a qualified love for truth, which a high authority has thought fit, under the mask of advice, to level against our people and our literature? A nation's character is its most sacred possession and degraded though we may be, through centuries of despotic rule, through the pressure of adverse circumstances which we could not control—for while other nations were scrambling for power and pelf, our ancestors were absorbed in the contemplation of the Supreme and the mysteries of the Supreme—degraded though we may be, I venture to think that we have sufficient self-respect and manliness yet left in us to protest against these aspersions on our veracity or at any rate to feel that we are undeserved and that they themselves are unveracious. In view of these reflections, still more in view of the higher problems of national progress—men like Debendranath Tagore, who by their lives have enhanced the public estimate of our national character, must be reckoned as being among the truest benefactors of our race. They added to the moral asset of our people—they stimulate our national self-respect—they silence, by the eloquent testimony of their lives, the venomous tongue of calumny. In this connection I am reminded of a saying of Carlyle's. In one of those epigrammatic phrases, which will endure as long as the language and literature of England endures, the sage of Chelsea observed that he would much rather lose the Indian Empire than part with Shakspeare and the writings of Shakspeare. We have us Indian Empire to lose, but we have our character to protect and safeguard; and those, who by their exalted and self-denying lives, help us in this national enterprise, it enthroned in our hearts and will for all time to come occupy a high and honourable place in the pantheon of our great men. The Maharshi is entitled to this unique distinction.

The Hon'ble Mr. Gupta has told us that Debendra Nath Tagore was known during the lifetime as the *Maharshi*. He was a *Maharshi* by universal assent, by the unstinted homage of his countrymen. It was not a Government title conferred upon him by a Notification Extraordinary in the *Gazette*. It was a God-given title, proclaimed by the will of Heaven for the voice of the people is the voice of God. The *Maharshi* was the anointed of the Lord. After his name, the letters of the alphabet did not blaze. His breast was not starry with honours. But his name was a name of honour among his countrymen, and wherever the name was pronounced it was pronounced in accent tremulous with respect and gratitude. His countrymen felt that they saw in him as they did in none else, the illumination of the Holy Spirit guiding his footsteps, filling his mind with a heavenly calm, leading him onward and upward nearer to his Divine Maker and they acclaimed him as the *Maharshi* and they accorded to him a measure of veneration which might have excited the just envy of the proudest member of our titled aristocracy. His talents, his wealth, his social provision entitled him to aspire to the highest honours and dignities of the State. But his interests, his affections and pursuits lay in an altogether different direction and he lived and died as a *Rishi* recalling to mind the purity and the sanctity of the ancient days when *Bharatbarsha* was the home of prophets and saints.

At a meeting like this we are necessarily precluded from entering into controversial matters. In the presence of the open grave of the *Maharshi* the voice of controversy is hushed and the soothing ascents of peace and harmony must alone prevail. The *Maharshi* was the friend of progress. Progress was his watchword. He felt that we could not remain where we were, and that we must either move forward or go backward, and that if we will not move forward, we must make up our minds to go backward. But his conceptions of progress followed the ancient and traditional lines.

He wanted to advance, but he wanted also to conserve. He took his stand upon the ancient ways. He looked around him and he did that which was right. Cognizant of the requirements of the future, he revered the past. The future was to him an expansion of the present and the past shaped and moulded to meet the evergrowing exigencies of the changing times. A nation that is oblivious of the past can have no care for the future. That was the lesson which the *Maharshi* taught. That was the lesson which we learn at his feet. That is the lesson which practised by other nations has been prolific of great results. Japan has absorbed the new without sacrificing the old, and Japan is among the greatest of modern nations. We cannot part company with our ancestors or their teachings ; but that, under their guidance and the watchful protection of their immortal spirits, we must march forward to the accomplishment of those high destinies which, I for one, firmly believe, are yet in store for us, so that the stream of our national life may flow on a continuous current, broadened and deepened and enlarged, it may be, by the accessories of modern culture, but all the same retaining in its ample bosom, as a priceless legacy, the *kohinoor* of its own Golconda—what bears upon it the stamp and the *imprimatur* of our revered ancestors. It is well that we should from time to time recall these lessons to mind. It is well that we recall them to mind on this occasion. For the forces of unrest are abroad and are vigorously at work. They need to be chasened and disciplined and guided into fructifying channels, under the masterful influences of our teachers—aye, under the masterful influences of those who, speaking from amid the silence of the tomb, speak with a voice of thunder.

The *Maharshi* is gone from our midst, he is enrolled among the Celestials, included in the fraternity of the immortals, linked in death with blessed Spirits who had consecrated their lives to the service to their country. Ram Mohun Roy, Keshub Chunder Sen, Iswar Chunder Vidyasagar have gree-



ted him in the Mansions of the Blest. 'Oh, let us not mourn for him, for he is not dead. The great never die. They live embalmed in their work and in the lives of those whom they have benefited. They alone are immortal in a world where all else are perishable. Empires may crumble into dust, dynasties may vanish from the scene of their power and pelf, the aspect of Nature herself may change but the achievements of the great endure for all time to come, ever living monuments of their genius and philanthropy. You propose to raise a memorial in honour of the *Maharshi* I wish you every success, but he needs no such memorial at your hands. He has raised his own—more lasting than bronze or marble which will be proof against the vicissitudes of fortune and the corroding influences of time. The noblest memorial that you can raise in his honour—a memorial the most acceptable to his spirit—most in conformity with his life-work—is to worship his spirit in the temples of your hearts, to imitate his example and to adopt into your every-day life and conduct that high-souled devotion—that persistency in truth which distinguished the *Maharshi* and which now that he is dead, he has bequeathed to his countrymen, whom he loved so well, as a legacy of priceless value.

### THE STUDENTS' UNION.

MEETING AT THE CITY COLLEGE HALL.

*September 8, 1905.*

The proceedings opened with an address by Babu Surendra Nath Banerjea in course of which he said :—

I am very glad that so many of you are assembled here for the purpose of organising the Students' Union. Here are so many of you that if you have three such meetings you will have still three such gatherings. All this testifies to the intense enthusiasm, the bitter sense of indignation, which the Partition of Bengal has evoked. The students have been found fault with by their Anglo-Indian critics for rowdysm, for aggressive conduct, for breaches of the peace and for acts

of violence. I am certain that everyone of you will do your best to maintain and uphold the law and the constitution, and you will not allow it to be said of you that you have broken the law or that you have done anything irregular, unlawful or unconstitutional. I ask you to bear this fact in mind that the success of the movement depends very largely upon the constitutional proceedings which you will adopt in this connection and that the breaches of the law are highly prejudicial to the best interests of the great cause which you have so much at heart. Therefore I ask you to exercise self-restraint and self-control and not to break the law on any account. Let it not be levelled as a charge against you that you have broken the law, that you have acted unconstitutionally—let it not be said that you have exposed yourselves to the punishment of the law. You are law-abiding and peaceful citizens and you think of no means except those of constitutional agitation and those lawful means will give the political emancipation of your country. I ask you to stand by the Swadeshi Movement and to take care that you do not purchase, during the Pujahs, any articles that are not Indian. Let it be a fundamental principle of your doctrine. I am glad to find that you are going to form yourselves into a great organisation. The rules of that organisation have been laid down. I will read to you the first two sentences of that constitution. (The speaker here read the rules). That Union would be the platform of common meeting-ground for the interchange of their ideas. The object is economical. The object is national, the object is patriotic, and as such it ought to appeal to your innermost and deepest feeling. I ask you to follow up the high patriotic idea and then you will grow up as wealthy citizens. That is the hope, the aspiration which the Union aims. The students are to make a common cause and you will triumph in all directions; your industries will grow and political emancipation will follow. The eyes of Calcutta, of Bengal, of the Anglo-Indian community, of the rulers, are fixed upon you

*at present. You are the cynosure of all eyes and all attention is centred upon you. Your ways are carefully watched. I ask you to conduct yourselves in such a way that you may come out of the ordeal unscathed and to pursue steadily the programme of the Swadeshi Movement, at the same time restrain yourselves within the boundary of law. This is my appeal and I make it in your best interests and I am confident all of you will have a hearty response to it.*

### MEETING AT BHOWANIPUR.

*September, 1905.*

A grand meeting was held at Bhowanipur to protest against the Partition of Bengal and support the Boycott movement. Babu Surendranath Banerjea moved the first Resolution, which runs thus :—"That this meeting desires to record its sense of indignant protest against the Proclamation regarding the Partition of Bengal as a deliberate affront to the public opinion of this country and as inconsistent with the respect due to the House of Commons, which has not pronounced an opinion on the subject pending the submission of prayers, as promised by the Secretary of State for India : " in doing so, he said :—

"My first words are words of encouragement for the great services which Lord Curzon has done to the people of this country. He has by his retrograde and re-actionary measures galvanized the people into a new life and the grand demonstration of the many thousands of people assembled is a proof positive of the awakening of the new life pulsating through the people. He has infused "Promethean Spark" into the dead bones of our national life, (Cheers) and the greatest re-actionary of all the Viceroy's will go down to the posterity as one of the makers of the Indian nation. (Hear, hear.) We are all standing face to face with one of the gravest calamities that ever had befallen the people of the Province. We are overwhelmed by a catastrophe the like of which had

never been witnessed since the commencement of the British Rule in India. A controversy arose between Lord Curzon and Lord Kitchener, to protest against the establishment of military autocracy in India. But no one has done more than His Excellency the Viceroy to inaugurate an autocracy in India. It would pale before the strongest military autocracy. No Viceroy had so sedulously set at defiance public opinion, trampled down the time-honoured usages and procedures than Lord Curzon. He had nullified the provisions of Her Gracious Majesty the Queen's Proclamation, had torn into tatters the memorable historic document, falsified the proud privileges—the constitutional rights of the people of India. Lord Curzon went to the Eastern districts ostensibly to ascertain public opinion but really to shape it after his own ideals ; when he found that was impossible, the tactics of the Government underwent a change. The people expressed the hope even in the great meeting of the Town Hall held in January 1905, that Government had arrived at no decision with regard to the matter of the Partition of Bengal. They were then living in the "Fool's Paradise."

On the 4th July Mr. Brodrick, in reply to Mr. Herbert Roberts, said that "the Government of India had submitted their proposals for the Partition of Bengal on the 18th February last." The project was strongly protested against, but all in vain ; for the Government gave an evasive reply. After the great meeting held in the Town Hall of Calcutta, a debate took place in the House of Commons, at which Sir Henry Fowler observed that he was not satisfied that the Government had arrived at a right conclusion. Mr. Brodrick observed that no case had been made out. Is then all this agitation desperate ? (Cries of never, never.) No, the Proclamation rather added fuel to the fire,—intensified the agitation. The people might have lost the ground for a moment, and they might have been worsted. But you should not give way to despondency. The Irish had been fighting for Home Rule for more than hundred years which they had not yet got.

But they are within a measurable distance of getting it. They have never yielded. Here in this province out of the Partition agitation has sprung up the *Swadeshi Movement*, beautiful to look at, fascinating to the heart and fraught with immense potentialities for good. The people are forced as a matter of moral obligation to boycott British and foreign goods. The movement have been in existence. It is an accomplished fact and is existing as a movement for the industrial regeneration of the people and the partition agitation has brought it into the political propaganda. We are animated by a high patriotic Resolution and so we mean no harm to anybody. An attempt is being made by a certain section of the Anglo-Indian Community to discredit the movement by charging the youngmen of the province with rowdyism. I ask you youngmen, to show by your conduct that you are lawful and peace-loving subjects and above all to stand by the *Swadeshi Movement*. I ask you to gather round the banners of your leaders from village to village, town to town, district to district, proclaim the Gospel—the glad tidings far and wide, ‘if the supply are insufficient you should have patience.’ If the ‘Puja’ goods are not forthcoming, you should dispense with them. We are in mourning why should we rejoice over the Puja? The great Goddess,—the *Durgati-nashini Durga*—The great retriever of all our mischief—would recognise the situation, bless the efforts, nerve the arms for the struggle in which the people are engaged. I am sure the struggle is bound to lead the people to a triumphant result and the reward would be the crowning reward of patriotic devotion and moral heroism sanctified by divine blessing. Take a solemn vow to henceforth eschew foreign goods. The industrial resources of the country—which are immense—are destroyed under the British administration, and the *Swadeshi Movement* will restore the industrial capabilities of the land that overflows with milk and money. The Movement will bring about not only the industrial but also the political   
nation of the country.

## MEETING AT COLUTOLA.

*September, 1905.*

A public meeting was held at the premises of Babu Jogendranath Mullick, Colutola, to consider the Swadeshi Movement. Babu Surendranath Banerjea was voted to the chair. He said :—

The first feelings—those feelings which are uppermost in our minds at the present moment—must be those of unstinted gratitude to the venerable gentleman who has just spoken and whose words of eloquent, earnest and emphatic advice must be cordially upheld and supported. His association with us is a proof positive of the universal character of the movement. It shows that young and old, high and low, rich and poor, influential and those whose voice is impotent in the counsels of the society, all are banded together to protest against the Partition of Bengal and uphold the Swadeshi Movement. They are standing face to face with one of the greatest calamities in the country. They are also on the threshold of the birth of a new nation. From amidst the darkness—the midnight darkness that surrounds us,—faint streaks of dawn were already visible and lo and behold ! in the far east there are glimpses of an awakening ! Lord Curzon, the greatest of all the re-actionary Viceroys, will go down to posterity as an up-builder of the Indian nation. He has fostered and stimulated the growth of the force which contributed to the birth of the nation. We have prayed, we have implored, we have begged, we have protested against the Partition of Bengal, but all in vain. Our voice is like that of one crying in the wilderness. Public opinion has been treated with undisguised contempt.

The Government has professed to rule our country with the best knowledge of the people and in accordance with our ideas and aspirations. But their acts, their measures, have been widely divergent from their professions. From this springs up the idea of starting the Boycott Movement that

the people may touch the pockets of British tax-payers and relieve them of the burden of gold which goes out of this country to enrich them. The illumination has come from on High. It is an inspiration which flashes across the horizon of our mind and infuses into us the blessed idea of the present movement. We have been working under the illumination of the Holy Spirit. I hope that God is with the movement. I believe that we are working under his inspired guidance—all the light, the illumination, the fervour, the enthusiasm which have animated the Movement come from on High. I have heard it said by a Mahomedan gentleman, whom I hold in high respect, that we are united to accept the Partition, making the best of the bad situation. But my advice is that the Hindus and the Mahomedans are none of them willing to accept it. They will protest against it, in season and out of season, until the entire province—East Bengal, West Bengal and Central Bengal—are united together, as of old.

No, the agitation will not be given up. The agitation will be continued. We may lose for the present movement and we have been worsted. We have lost ground. But, I ask you, should we despair? Lo! behold the heavenly inspiration and heavenly revelation. We cannot despair. The British Government, in the frenzy of its omnipotence, may divide Bengal into hundred districts, but East Bengal, West Bengal and Central Bengal will be united in heart, mind and soul. High officials can take money out of our pockets, but heart they cannot take. I request the Hon'ble Babu Ambika Charan Mozumdar to convey to the people of East Bengal, as he will go there, on behalf of this community, that we are united heart, soul, ideals and aspirations until the province is restored to its former condition. I here represent the ideas and aspirations of everyone here present.

I cannot forget the splendid policy of Emperor Akbar and his illustrious successors. In those days, Hindus and Mahomedans were alike. It is true, there was no Proclamation like that of 1858. But the policy of Akbar was

marked on the heart of the people which could not be obliterated. That policy was also adopted by his successors until the present British regime came into existence. Hindus were appointed to the highest posts ; Raja Man Singh, Birbal and Todar Mal occupied the highest positions in the Empire. There were fraternal relations established between the Hindus and the Mahomedans. But the present state of things is not like that. The present policy is to exclude the children of the soil from the high offices.

Mahomedan Brothers ! Your God is my God. (Cry of "Alla-ho-Akbar"). The Hindus also will say that (Shouts of "Bande Mataram"). We stand shoulder to shoulder upon the platform of constitutional agitation, and this will lead us to a victorious and triumphant conclusion.

With regard to intemperance of which Babu Govindlal Dhur had made mention in his speech, I add that brandy was a luxury of the past and also believe that cigarette-smoking, and brandy-drinking was also a thing of the past. There is no "Prayaschitta" (atonement) for the sin of drinking. I entreat you to abstain from that foul contamination.

I entreat you again to abstain from the use of foreign-made goods ; Sugar, Salt, Enamelled Wares, and Clothes of foreign import can all be done away with and the manufactures of our country can be used instead. I pray you to be patient in case of the supply of clothes proving insufficient. You should dispense with the Puja celebration. The nation is in mourning, why should we rejoice ? I believe "Durgati-nashini Doorga" will give us strength and power against the tremendous odds, sanctify our efforts, bless our exertions and bless now that we may be victorious. Let us gather round the banners of the Swadeshi Movement, take them from town to town, village to village, district to district, proclaim the good tidings, the gospel of the movement, the message of the new life, and under the movement, the industrial capabilities will again revive and Providence will bless you.



## MEETING AT KUMARTULI.

*September, 1905.*

Babu Surendranath Banerjea first addressed the meeting. He said that about 15 thousand people, including Merchants, traders, shopkeepers and Zamindars—had assembled there. A common feeling inspired them all. They were talking of it everywhere. All of them were saying that they would not use English goods. Why was it so? Everything was due to the Partition of Bengal. Bengal would be divided. So long they had been under one Government—they were like brothers. But now they would be separated. They would not let it happen. They wanted to tell the Government that the latter might divide them but they would not be separated. They would remain united in heart, in soul and in ideas. And they would look upon each other as brothers. They also wanted to tell Government that they were not seditious. For the matter of the Partition, West Bengal rather be nearest and dearest to them. For the last two years they were protesting against the Partition, but all their protests, all their agitations had been of no avail. They had therefore resolved that they would not use any English-made goods. Nearly 50 crores of rupees went out to England every year for piece-goods, shoes etc. This draining had been the case for the last 100 years. If that money had remained here this country would have been very rich. The lecturer then said that he was a Brahmin, a Kulin Brahmin to boot and in that capacity he insisted upon his hearers in the front of the temple which was situated there to use country-made goods. He asked them not to use Liverpool salt continuing he said that there was a plenty of sugar in their own country. Why would they use foreign sugar? He then told his hearers not to use enamelled articles. As regards cloth, he said that about 30 crores of rupees were yearly going out to foreign countries. He told his hearers not to use Manchester goods and asked them to be patient and the demands would be

Swadeshi ! The gentleman was thunder-struck ; for the Cobbler said that if he did so, he would be outcasted by his caste-people ! The Uriah Palki-bearer of Mymensing promised in a body that they would not serve any body who used foreign goods ! On an occasion, the speaker went on to relate, a coachman turned out of his carriage a passenger who smoked cigarette, declaring fearlessly that he would not serve any one who smoked cigarette. The speaker made an eloquent exhortation to the Mahomedans to co-operate with their Hindu brethren and contribute towards the success of the Swadeshi Movement. He admired the noble policy of Emperor Akbar and his successors, under whose administrations the Hindus were treated with a great deal of generosity and kindness and given equal privileges with the Mahomedans. The Hindus were on the highest ranks of the administration of the country such as Man Sing and Todar Mall. But during the present regime, the children of the soil were excluded from high posts. At the conclusion of the speech the gathering swore all in a body not to use foreign goods.)

### CONGRESS AT BENARES.

1905

Babu Surendranath Banerjee said :—

Mr. President and brother delegates, when I entered this hall I had not the smallest idea that it would be necessary for me to speak to any resolution of to-day. But the mandate has been laid upon me by your President that I should speak. Ten years ago when I was the President of the Poona Congress, I vehemently entered my protest against the mandate theory of Lord George Hamilton. By a bitter irony of fate the person who recorded that protest is now called upon to eat his own words and submit to the mandate of our worthy President. I obey because I regard you, Sir, the elect of the people, as occupying, in my estimation, and I venture to think, in the estimation of the people of India, a higher and more responsible, and a certainly more affectionate place

than the Secretary of State can ever hold (cheers).

I am in strong sympathy with this resolution. It used to be my own resolution on this platform from years' end to years' end. From the year 1886 up till the year 1892, if you turn up the Congress reports, you will find me either as a mover or seconder or supporter of the resolution in connection with the expansion of the Councils. And in 1890, along with my friends Mr. Muholkar, Mr. Joshi, Mr. Norton and one or two others, we went on a deputation to England. We held many public meetings and we had the high honour of a personal interview with Mr. Gladstone (cheers). Sir, as the result of that deputation, as the result of the persistent efforts of the Congress, the Statute of 1892 was passed (cheers). We are dissatisfied with that Statute. It is a halting measure ; an imperfect and inadequate measure of reform. It was bound to be so. Who were the authors of that measure ? Who was the arch pontiff of that occasion ? The authors of that measure were the Tory Government of that day, and the arch pontiff and high priest who ushered it into existence was George Nathaniel Curzon (shame). For he was then the Under-Secretary of State in the India Office. If that were a measure which was introduced by a Liberal Government, if that was a measure which had behind it the inspiration of Mr. Gladstone's broad-minded Liberalism, I venture to think it would have been a very different piece of Legislation from what it has been.

Sir, for 8 years I had the honour of a seat in the Bengal Legislative Council. I know how hopeless a task it was to fight the battles of the people and the country against the solid phalanx of officialism arrayed against you in the Councils of the Empire. We had the Calcutta Municipal Bill. It was a very important measure. We introduced amendment after amendment. What was the fate of these amendments ? We lost most of them—90 per cent. of them. The 10 per cent. that were carried were carried not at the point of the bayonet but by the grace and condescension of our rulers ;

and in a moment of irritation, I will not conceal the fact from you—addressing the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir John Woodburn, I said from my place in the Bengal Council, “Sir, what is the good of our being here? We come and place before you amendment after amendment only to be thrown out of this Council. If you have made up your mind about passing the bill in its entirety you have only to intimate the fact and we say good-bye and depart from this place.” That was what I said. After that indignant protest a few of our amendments were allowed to be passed. I think, Sir, we make a very moderate demand. We say we want a further expansion of the Councils. In Bengal, a population of seventy millions, is represented by how many members do you think? By ten. I suppose the same unsatisfactory state of things prevails everywhere, wherever we have a Legislative Council. We want better and a more adequate representation of the non-official element. I would like to suggest that a member should be taken from each district. I should like to suggest that we should have the right, as you suggest in the resolution, of dividing the Councils upon financial questions. The financial debates of the Councils are of an academic order. We make speeches. They listen attentively sometimes, and sometimes impatiently. The matters are promised to be considered. Sir, as a matter of fact, very little attention is paid to them. Here is our demand, but whether we shall have a further expansion of the Councils or not will depend upon ourselves. A noble people cannot have an ignoble Government and an ignoble people cannot have the gift of representative institutions. If you make up your mind, determined and resolved in the depths of your heart to emancipate yourselves from your present condition of serfdom, then rise to the height of your manhood, assert your rights as responsible citizens (cheers). If you are determined to do that, the Councils will be expanded, but not otherwise. If you hold this meeting and then go to sleep for the next 12 months,

do nothing, think nothing about your country, the chances of your political emancipation are remote. Therefore, brother-delegates, I ask you all once again to take the firm resolution in your mind that you will begin the agitation in this connection, continue the agitation through good report and evil report, determined to emancipate yourselves and obtain for your country and for your countrymen the priceless gift of representative institutions, then the blessing of God will be with you and your labours will be crowned with the success which they deserve (loud and continued applause.)

### THE PARTITION OF BENGAL.

Babu Surendranath Banerjea rose amidst deafening cheers and shouts of *Bande Mataram* which were kept up for nearly five minutes. He then addressed the Congress as follows on the resolution relating to the Partition of Bengal which was in these words :—

“ That this Congress records its emphatic protest against the Partition of Bengal in the face of the strongest opposition on the part of the people of the Province,

“ That having regard to the intense dissatisfaction felt by the entire Bengali community at the dismemberment of their Province and their manifest disinclination not to accept the partition as an accomplished fact, this Congress appeals to the Government of India and to the Secretary of State to reverse or modify the arrangements made in such a manner as to conciliate public opinion and allay the excitement and unrest manifest among large masses of the people.

“ That this Congress recommends the adoption of some arrangement which would be consistent with administrative efficiency, and would place the entire Bengali Community under one undivided administration either by the appointment of a Governor and Council or by the adoption of some other administrative arrangement that may be thought desirable.”

Brother-delegates, ladies and gentlemen, after the inspiring strains of *Bande Mataram* it is meet and proper that this resolution should be placed before this house, the subject matter being one which has convulsed the whole of Bengal (A VOICE : the whole of India.) I rejoice to learn that our griefs, our sorrows, our disappointments and our trials are sympathised with by brother-delegates throughout the rest of the country (cheers). Encouraged by your moral support which we need as much as you can give, we are prepared to fight undaunted the battles of Bengal and the battles of India (cheers). I think, Sir, I am not guilty of the slightest exaggeration when I say that no question has, within the life of this generation, so profoundly stirred the hearts of our country-men or has given rise to such wide spread and intense dissatisfaction, irritation and indignation as the Partition of our Province—our beautiful Motherland. In our Province this question is the talk of the market-place ; it is the gossip of the family circle ; it is the burden of popular song ; it is the theme of the inspiring eloquence of popular oratory (cheers). I never knew until now that my language, the language of my mother, the language she spoke to me and I spoke to her, was capable of such marvellous use for the purpose of explanation, of argument and inspiration (cheers). Sir, the year 1905 is one of the darkest and saddest in our annals, relieved by the reflection that it witnessed an upheaval of national life and an awakening of national consciousness without parallel in our history (loud cheers). Lord Curzon has divided our Province (shame) ; he has sought to bring about the disintegration of our race (shame), and to destroy the solidarity of our popular opinion. Has he succeeded in this novel endeavour ? (no no) He has built better than he knew ; he has laid broad and deep the foundations of our national life (cheers) ; he has stimulated those forces which contribute to the up-building of nations (cheers) ; he has made us a nation (hear, hear) ; and the most re-actionary of the Indian Viceroy's will go down to posterity as the

Architect of the Indian National life (hear hear). That will be the authoritative, final judgment of history and posterity on the work of Lord Curzon's Government and administration. Sir, the year 1905 opens, so far as this Partition question is concerned, with a great public meeting held at the Town Hall of Calcutta. It was presided over by Sir Henry Cotton (loud and prolonged cheers), a name honoured in Bengal as well as in India (cheers). Great as our obligations are to Sir Henry Cotton, they have been accentuated and enhanced by his strenuous efforts to avert the Partition of Bengal, and now that it has been accomplished, by still more arduous labours to undo it, he will be reckoned for all times to come, amongst the greatest benefactors of the Bengali people and race (three cheers to Sir Henry Cotton).

Sirs, at that meeting held at the Town Hall we confessed to a sense of relief at no decision having been arrived at in connection with the Partition question, and we expressed the hope that if there was any modification of the scheme it would be submitted for public consideration. We were living in a fool's paradise, for, at the time when we held this public meeting and were felicitating ourselves upon our good luck, the judgment of Lord Curzon had been pronounced upon the Partition question though we knew nothing at all about it; for on the 4th of July Mr. Brodrick, replying to a question in the House of Commons said that he had already given his sanction to the Partition proposals of the Government of India which had been received by him on the 18th February last. It, therefore, stands to reason that these proposals must have been submitted and sent to England towards the end of January. On the 12th January, Sir Henry Cotton forwarded his proposals to the Government of India. We received an acknowledgment in three weeks' time; that was about the beginning of February. The Government of India had our resolutions before them; they were dealing with those resolutions; they knew that we had confessed to a sense of relief at the Government not having

arrived at any pronouncement with regard to the Partition question. They knew that we were under a false impression. It was their duty to have removed that impression. They did nothing of the kind (shame). They lent countenance to the false impression which prevailed in the public mind. They became a conscious party to that false impression. Now, Sir, if a private person had dealt by me in that fashion I should have called him a dishonest fellow. Are we to understand that the code of morality which governs the proceedings of the Government of India is meaner and baser than the code which governs the relations of private life (laughter)? And if that be so then what are we to think of those lofty principles of morality which were enforced with such consummate eloquence by the Chancellor of the Calcutta University on the Convocation day (ironical cheers.)

Sir, in the early days of the controversy some deference was shown to public opinion. The proposals of the Government were published in the newspapers ; conferences were held in Belvedere ; my friend was one of the shining lights of this Conference. I do not know that much came out of them ; but they used to be held at Belvedere and Lord Curzon went down to the Eastern districts to ascertain public opinion by personal conference and examination. Sir, if the truth has to be told Lord Curzon went to the Eastern districts not to learn but to teach, not to ascertain what the public felt but to compel the public to adopt his views and sentiment. He failed. The people of the Eastern districts are a manly and stubborn race, possessed of much grit. They are prosperous and they exhibited the independence which prosperity brings in its train. I see before me the representatives of those districts. Brothers from East Bengal, from North Bengal, we had been parted by that fiat of an autocratic power, but the stroke of autocracy has brought our hearts nearer to you (cheers). We are, and shall always remain, of one mind, of one soul, animated by kindred hopes and aspirations, marching side by side towards the accomplishment



of our common destinies (cheers). Who can sunder those who are tied by the bonds of Nature? The omnipotence of Government quails before the Majesty of Heaven and ties of Nature (cheers).

Well, Sir, Lord Curzon failed, and when he failed to compel the people of the Eastern districts to adopt his views, the tactics of the Government underwent a great change. Then were held those secret conferences, those private deliberations of which the public knew nothing; they were not allowed to know anything. We knew nothing about the decision of the Government till the 4th of July last. I knew nothing about the particulars of the scheme till the Proclamation of the 20th of July. We begged, we prayed, we protested, but all in vain. No one would listen to us. Ours was a voice crying in the wilderness (shame). And then, in utter desperation, as a last resort, we were driven to the adoption of the boycott (cheers)—the policy of passive resistance which represents a memorable departure in our political programme (hear hear). It was a protest, nothing more than a protest, against the indifference of the British public in regard to Indian affairs, and the consequent contemptuous treatment of Indian public opinion by the Government of India. The protest went home! It was marvelously effective. What we could not achieve in 500 meetings extending over 2 years' time we secured by a boycott lasting for a period of three months (cheers). Those who came to scoff remained to pray. The members of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, which felt a grandfatherly interest in our concerns (laughter), sent a gratuitous piece of advice to us to give up the boycott, but at the same time they exerted all their influence upon the Secretary of State to cancel the Partition of Bengal (hear hear). I have the best reasons for believing, I have said so publicly, I said it to the Viceroy of India, I said so publicly, that a wire was sent by Mr. Brodrick to Lord Curzon on or about the 12th of October asking him if possible to postpone

the Partition till the meeting of the Parliament (cheers). Lord Curzon declined to accept the suggestion (shame). With that exuberant love for the Bengalis and for the Indians he would not conciliate them. He added that the agitation was childish, and that it was about to subside. That was said on the 12th of October, to-day it is the 29th of December : the agitation has not subsided (no no and cheers). the agitation will not subside until the Partition is cancelled. To-day an immense meeting is being held in Calcutta to attract the Prince's attention to the consequences of the Partition (cheers). The agitation will not subside : it shows no signs of abatement until that perennial source of irritation—the Partition—has been modified or withdrawn (cheers).

Well, gentlemen, the boycott is a political instrument in our hands. We resolved to use it when necessary, subject, of course, to the safeguard that it is only to be used in extreme cases when there is a sufficiently powerful body of public opinion to justify its use and to ensure its success. It is a perfectly legitimate and constitutional weapon (hear, hear). If our rulers will not listen to us, if they will treat Indian public opinion with contumely and disrespect, and if they will trample under foot the constitutional usages which constitute the guarantee of the British power and have given us so much contentment and happiness, they must make up their minds to part with some portion of their trade with India, and they must not be surprised if we decline to fill their pockets with gold.

Well Sir, the Partition was carried out on the 16th October last despite the pledge which Mr. Brodrick had given to the House of Commons to the effect that he would lay the papers on the table of the House, a pledge which involved the undertaking that the Partition would be postponed pending the final pronouncement of Parliament. The 16th October is a memorable day in our annals. I trust it will be a memorable day in the annals of

India (hear, hear). It was a day of universal mourning, of universal fasting and universal fraternising ; Hindus and Muhammadans embracing each other in public streets (cheers), or in private places, vowing the vow of eternal love and concord (cheers and loud applause). The shops were closed, the domestic hearth was not lit, food was not cooked, Calcutta presented the aspect of the City of the Dead. A spirit of desolation seemed to hover over the scene. The genius of the Mother-land was incarnate amidst this bewildering scene of grief and sorrow. Thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of pious Hindus, and Hindus who were not pious, rushed to the waters of the Bhagirathi in order to purify themselves for the sins of their rulers (cheers).

Thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of people walked through the streets of Calcutta bare-footed, clad in the garb of woe. Amidst the wild scene of excitement, the National Fund was started ; amidst this wild scene of excitement the foundation stone of the Federation Hall was laid (cheers) by one who was our President and occupied that place which you, now, Sir, adorn. Prostrate on the bed of illness, scarcely capable of moving, my illustrious friend, Mr. Ananda Mohan Bose (cheers), came in a litter attended by Dr. Nilratan Sarcar, to lay the foundation stone, perhaps the last function which he will be privileged on this side of the grave to perform, and thus conferred another obligation upon his countrymen.

Well, gentlemen, while public excitement was so great, what was the Government doing ? Forging instruments of repression, laying the foundations for the inauguration of a reign of terror (shame). Yes, it is a matter of inexpressible shame. Within eight days of the 16th of October, Mr. Carlyle issued his famous Circular (shame). Under the terms of that Circular, students are prohibited from taking part in public demonstrations (shame) ; and if they did what then ? They were not to be punished, but the institutions to which they belong were

to be disaffiliated, grants-in-aid were to be withdrawn from them and their teachers were to be exalted to the dignity of Special Constables ! (shame). A more outrageous scheme of vicarious punishment never entered the imagination of the greatest autocrat of the middle ages. But it was in the new Province that the reign of terror was inaugurated after the latest and most approved Russian pattern. In the new Province public meetings in public place have been prohibited ; Sankeertan parties are not permitted to march through public streets ; the singing of the *Bande Mataram* (shouts of, *Bande Mataram* a voice once ; more jointly *Bande Mataram* was sung by a large section of the audience rising to their feet) the singing of the *Bande Mataram* which you have just sung with so much zest and devotion is punished as a crime and offence (shame). Respectable people have been degraded by being enrolled as special constables (shame). Not long ago a veritable reign of terror was established at Sirajgang and Barisal, and the Police were let loose in the streets, indiscriminately assaulted the people, selecting the leaders of the Anti-Partition movement as objects for special vengeance. When an aggrieved complained to the Sub-Divisional Officer of Sirajgang the courts were closed against him. Magistrates would not receive the complaint.

At Rajshahi the other day a public meeting was disbursed at the point of the bayonet. I use the words "at the point of the bayonet," advisedly. In a place, in a private place, fifty policemen armed with rifles and bayonets commanded by a posse of inspectors and sub-inspectors marched down to the place of meeting, ordered the leaders of the meeting to disperse. My friend, Mr. Abul Kasim, I do not see him here (A VOICE, he is here) he was addressing the meeting and a gun was pointed at him (shame) (VOICES : let us see him, let him come on the platform). My friend asked the inspector to produce his authority, and the inspector said that he has received confidential orders from the Magistrate which he declined to pro-

duce. Very properly then he ordered the meeting to dissolve. Since the news of the incident arrived in Calcutta, Mr. J. Chaudhuri and six others, every one of them resolved to go to jail if necessary (loud and prolonged cheers), went down to Rajshahi in order to test the authority of the police and to vindicate the right of public meetings (hear hear). They held a meeting, the largest ever held at Rajshahi, but the police would not submit to the test, the brave fellows that they were (ironical cheers). They were conspicuous by their absence, and since then we have been holding a meeting every day at Rajshahi (cheers). Our boys are being prosecuted, and some of them even sent to jail (shame). I heard the other day touching incident regarding the pluck and heroism of young men—the pillars of popular movements—whom I always regard with a sense of affectionate and paternal interest (cheers). About half a dozen of them were locked up in jail in one of the towns of the Eastern districts. As soon as they found themselves inside the lock-up they made the walls resound with the echoes of their patriotic songs (shouts of *Bande Mataram*). The jailors were touched. They brought them food which they declined to accept (cries of *Bande Mataram*). If our rulers think that they will repress us in this way, kill the Anti-Partition movement by having recourse to despotic Russian methods they are greatly mistaken. Repression will not daunt us (hear hear) ; rather it will stiffen us in our opposition to the Partition and our support of the Swadeshi Movement (cheers). The blood of the martyrs is the cement of the church (cheers) ; and our cause will be consecrated by the sufferings of our young martyrs. We regard that cause to be of divine origin. Rightly or wrongly we believe ourselves to be humble instruments in the hands of the Almighty Providence (cheers), walking under the illumination of His Holy Spirit. Call it delusion ; call it superstition ; call it fanaticism ; reckon us as being among the deluded maniacs of mankind. You have read les-

sons of history in vain if you do not realize the fact that men fortified by such belief and working under such conviction are irresistible and invincible ; there is no danger which they are not ready to brave, no difficulty which they are not prepared to surmount.

The Partition is now an accomplished fact ; it has been carried out, but we at any rate do not regard it as an accomplished fact. The resolution says that the Bengalis have exhibited considerable disinclination to regard it as an accomplished fact, and the resolution says truly. And, gentlemen, if you read the resolution you will find that the essence of our prayer is that we want the entire Bengali community to be placed under the same common administration. We do not want to be separated from our kith and kin. Is that not an aspiration which is reasonable and righteous, and is there any one who will not respond sympathetically to an aspiration of that kind ? May we not, therefore, appeal to Lord Minto and Mr. John Morley, the new Secretary of the State, to reverse the decree which has been passed upon us by Lord Curzon ? May we not be permitted to indulge the hope that Lord Minto's mission in India is to conciliate, to throw oil upon the troubled waters, to undo the mischief wrought by his predecessor ? His illustrious ancestor who ruled over us about (100) hundred years ago gave us peace amidst war. May we not appeal to him to emulate the example of his illustrious ancestor and spread the blessings of peace, contentment and happiness throughout the length and breadth of the country ? As regards Mr. John Morley, we are all more or less his disciples. We have sat at his feet ; our intellectual and moral natures have been fed, stimulated and ennobled by the great lessons which he enforced with such consummate eloquence. He has taught us in his life of Edmund Burke that Asiatics have rights and Europeans have their obligations in India. He has taught us the paramountcy of moral laws in the Government of human affairs. May we not ask him to apply

his own principles to the solution of the Partition problem and the solution of other Indian problems? Above all, we must learn to depend upon ourselves. To native strength and native devotion and native courage dominated by the spirit of constitutionalism, we must look forward for our eventual emancipation. You know for the moment we have lost : for the moment we have been defeated ; but let us not despond. The Irish have been fighting for Home Rule for over 100 years and they have not yet got it, but they are within a measurable distance of success. Let us emulate the courage, the enthusiasm and heroic self-sacrifice of the children of the Emerald Isle. Bear in mind that we are living through critical and great times. The sun has risen in the East. Japan has hedged the rising Sun but that Sun of Asia will pass in its meridian course over this hapless land and shed upon us its brilliance and lustre. Even now we feel the first flutterings of an awakened national consciousness. Oh ! let us strengthen them and invigorate them, ennoble them for the glorification of our Mother-land, for the lasting credit of the great race to which we belong and for the permanence upon broad national lines of that great administration which in the past was fired with lofty ideals of duty towards India, but which, in the present moment, we are anxious to rescue from the reproach of re-action and retrogression (loud prolonged cheers). I thank you, gentlemen, once more, I have nothing to add to this resolution.

#### PRIZE-DISTRIBUTION MEETING.

*February, 1906.*

SIR—We assembled here to-night to perform what I, for me, regard as a solemn patriotic duty and, in respect of which, I will add that we are not to be deterred therefrom by the frowns or the smiles of power. I think, Sir, our countrymen have proved, by the hard logic of facts, which have transpired within the last few months, that the Bengali of to-day is a very different personage from the Bengali as he is

represented to be by historians, more anxious to round off their sonorous periods than to tell the real and veritable truth. Our country men have proved and the martyrs, whom we are about to honour to-day, have had large share in it—our countrymen have proved by their sufferings that repression will not daunt them. We have read the lessons of history and we have read in a book, which we highly prized, that the blood of the martyrs is the cement of the Church. Our cause, consecrated by the sufferings of our youngmen, will grow in strength and vitality as the years roll on. We have all heard the story of the youngmen in Mymensingh. They were sent to the lock-up in connection with some Swadeshi incident. As soon as they found themselves within their prison cells, they made the prison walls resound with the echoes of their patriotic songs. The hearts of the jailors were touched for after all they are human. They brought them food which they declined to partake of. The terrors of the law will indeed daunt us. We have cheerfully submitted to the stroke of the whip. With equal alacrity have we suffered the rigors of imprisonment, and now we are gathered together in this hall to declare to the world that those, who have suffered for their devotion to the Swadeshi cause, have not been degraded in our estimation but that, on the contrary, their punishments have enhanced the public respect which is felt for them and have won for them a high place in our affectionate regard. It is not indeed possible for us to reverse the decrees of our rulers. We are impotent—our voice and our vote count for nothing in the Counsels of the Empire. But, in our social and domestic concerns, we are still all powerful. Here we permit no intrusion of any kind on the part of any one. Here, in this domain, which is exclusively reserved for us, we say to the intruder, "Hands off—this is our affair and not yours."

If we cannot reverse the decrees of our rulers, we can, at any rate, guide and control the public mind of Bengal. If



we cannot modify the punishment which have been inflicted, we can at any rate, neutralize their effect upon public opinion. If the object of punishment be to deter by degrading, we say that those who have suffered in the Swadeshi cause shall not be degraded. If the object of punishment be to deter by the infliction of pain, we say that pain cheerfully borne is no deterrent, and pain is cheerfully borne when the plaudits of the whole community and the mandate of an approving conscience follow the infliction. It has been asked whether it is constitutional to hold a demonstration such as this, and if constitutional, whether it is wise and expedient? I venture to answer both these questions in the affirmative. The authorities of the state hold their powers as a trust for the public good. The public are their masters and they are truly public servants—not in a figurative, but in higher and literal sense. The public have therefore every right to sit in judgment on their conduct.

They do so everyday in connection with executive orders. The same principle applies to judicial decisions. Our Anglo-Indian fellow-citizens have set an excellent example to us in this respect. You know what they do when they believe that any of their countrymen has been wrongly punished by a court of law. They agitate, and agitate and never cease to agitate until they have obtained some sort of redress. You know what they did in connection with the Bain case. Even after the accused had been discharged by the High Court, they submitted a protest to Government with a view to prevent a recurrence of proceedings such those which had formed subject-matter of their complaint. We are, therefore, quite within our rights in holding this demonstration. But is it wise and consistent with prudence and considerations of expediency? I confess this is a question somewhat more difficult and complicated. But I ask—is it possible to overlook the moral significance and the educative value of a demonstration like this? If the

political and moral education of the people be a supreme factor in the evolution of national life, then I venture to hold that the demonstration of to-day is abundantly justified. It might be said that a meeting like the present will still further irritate our rulers. I fear it is too late in the day to bring forward an argument of this kind. We have been offending our rulers rather too frequently in recent years. The Indian National Congress is a huge offence. The smaller Provincial Conferences are so many offences on a somewhat reduced scale. Our political agitations are a perennial source of irritation. The agitation against the Partition of Bengal is cordially detested as implying a perverse determination, on our part not to accept what is regarded as 'an accomplished fact.' I ask you—are you prepared to give up the Congress, to close your Conferences, to abandon political agitation and to accept the Partition of Bengal and go down on your knees and invoke the blessing of Almighty Providence on your rulers for the boon which they have thrust upon you against your wishes and which forsooth, you, in your folly, are not able or are unwilling to appreciate ! I fear you are not prepared to do anything of the sort. I fear it is too late in the day to discuss the question of pleasing or displeasing the authorities. We cannot hunt with the hounds, and run with the hare. We cannot serve both God and Mammon. For my part, as one going down vale of years, I will say this that I have made my choice—definite, clear and pronounced. Have you made yours ?

I ask you whether you have decided to serve God or Mammon ; whether you will consecrate yourselves to the service of your country or to the furtherance of your personal self-aggrandisement ? Let there go forth a spontaneous outburst of expression from this great gathering that we, who are assembled here, are resolved to live or die for the Swadeshi cause. The line of cleavage between the rulers and the ruled is becoming wider day by day. I ask—who is responsible

for it? God knows that awful burden does not rest upon our heads. Our rulers are responsible. Those who misapprehend the situation and who coming from the wilds of the Central Provinces, misunderstand the temper and character of the people of Bengal are accountable of the unhappy tension and excitement which prevail throughout these Provinces. They seek to repress where the sovereign remedy is conciliation. They seek to quench that flame by the application of force and the flame blazes forth with redoubled fury. But whatever may be the defects of our rulers—and there has been a distinct deterioration in their qualities—our course of duty is plain and simple, namely, to serve our country with unflinching devotion to her interest and to the cause of constitutional agitation which we are resolved to uphold.

You, gentlemen, have by your sufferings set us a noble example, and it is because we mean to profit by that example that we are here to night. We desire to record a vote of confidence in your favour—not in your interest, but in your own—we want to declare to the world that your punishments have not degraded you, that punishment cheerfully borne in the country's cause never degrade any one, but they are the passports to public honour and popular applause and to the affection and gratitude of the country. Martyrs in our cause, go forth from this hall, impressed with the conviction that honouring you we proclaim to the world our firm determination to honour the future martyrs of our race. You are among the first of the glorious band. I am sure, you will not be the last. But, whether first and last, in your sufferings you had our sympathies, and now in the honour of your triumph you enjoy, in an unstinted measure, the blessings of your fellow-countrymen. In honouring the martyrs, however, let us not forget the cause for which they have suffered. I ask to rise from your places and cry out '*Bande Mataram.*' (At this the whole meeting rose to a man and there was loud and prolonged shouting of *Bande Mataram.*)

Continuing, the speaker said:—Renew the Swadeshi vow—the solemn vow—before you go, that you will abstain as far as in your power lies, from purchasing and using foreign goods and that you will, to the best of your powers, use and purchase home-made and indigenous articles. Will you take this vow in the presence of God and man?

The meeting thereupon rose and responded by loud and prolonged cries of Bande Mataram.

### INAUGURAL ADDRESS TO THE ENTRANCE CANDIDATES.

*March, 1906.*

Babu Surendranath Banerjea said that it was a great pleasure to him to meet youngmen like the students assembled in the meeting. In their company and associated with them, the speaker sought to inspire them with his ideals and convictions. But he owed them a deep debt of gratitude for the ardour and enthusiasm which their touch communicated to him. It was no exaggeration for him to say that in the company of youngmen he breathed an atmosphere, fragrant with the aroma of divine enthusiasm. The speaker did not know what feelings of audience were as they listened to the songs; but he could explain to them what he felt. He felt this that his audience and himself were children of a great ancient heritage, that they had behind them illustrious past, and if they were true to their past they must make a future worthy of that past. Their land was consecrated, the air breathed was sanctified by the breath of the illustrious and divine Rishis of old, who sang of God in the morning of the world. (cheers). The ground was consecrated by the dust of their immortal sires. The land was holy. Should they make it impure by leading unworthy lives? (Cries of "No") The speaker hoped they would not. An Englishman might feel proud of the great achievement of his country. Hindus and Musalmans of India ought to

feel even a greater pride in the achievements of their glorious sires. When the world was sunk in depths of barbarism, who was it that held aloft the torch of civilization ?

It was the ancient Hindus. In the Middle Ages when the world was sunk in the depth of darkness, who was it that spread far and around the light of knowledge and learning ? Musulmans—successors of the great Mahomed. The speaker exhorted the Hindus and Mahomedans alike to bear this fact in mind that both of them, by their race, religion and tradition, were the inheritors of a mighty civilization, and he asked them, as such inheritors, to make the future of that civilization worthy of its glorious past. As far as the speaker himself was concerned, he and those of his age had perhaps accomplished their destinies. They were going down the vale of year,—their mantle would soon drop from their weary shoulders. They were sinking under the weight of their cross. That mantle, that cross, the youngmen would have to take up. The speaker and his colleagues were leaving a great legacy of unfulfilled obligation. As for himself the speaker thought of nothing else, spoke of nothing else, dreamt of nothing else, except the Swadeshi cause, and the deliverance of the land from the industrial and political shackles under which she laboured. Still the obligations of his life could not be all fulfilled. Although the obligations rested upon the speaker and his colleagues, they could not be adequately discharged. They would therefore bequeathe to their successors this heritage of the unfulfilled obligation ; and the speaker asked the youngmen present to prove themselves worthy of those obligations. He exhorted them to prepare themselves for the great task that lay before them. He asked them to bear the fact in mind that they were the children of a new age and that they would be the inheritors of a new dispensation altogether—a dispensation which, if properly fulfilled, would lead to the industrial, political and moral emancipation of the country, (applause). In order to qua-

lify themselves for that great task, the students, the speaker thought, should prosecute their studies by all means and not give them up, but they should also cultivate those high qualities,—devotion,—love of truth, self-abnegation and self-sacrifice,—which contributed so largely to the upbuilding of nations and communities.

The speaker asked the youngmen to look at Japan. Why is she so great to-day ? Was it her religion, was it her political institution, was it her social system, or was it even her marvellous educational system ? The greatness of Japan lay in that little word of which they had heard so much—*bushido*, sacrifice, sacrifice and sacrifice (loud cheers.) They were required to make sacrifices. Their doctrine should be self-abnegation (applause.) The speaker believed that the youngmen could not shrink from it. Their ancestors were noted for their self-sacrifice. India was the cradle, the home, the centre, the starting point, of great ideals. Buddha was born here,—that miracle of self-sacrificing devotion—Chaitanya was born here,—Ram Mohon Ray was born here,—Keshub Chandra Sen was born here, and their last prophet was not yet come. The youngmen were the descendants of those distinguished ancestors. The speaker asked his hearers if they were wanting in those qualities which distinguished their great ancestors. The youngmen of their country had already shown wonderful capacity for self-sacrifice. They were the pioneers, they were the first martyrs and the speaker hoped they would not be the last. Subjected to serious hardships, they had exhibited those capacities in a large measure. He exhorted the youngmen present to follow the ideals which had been presented to them by their collaborators, men like Rajendra Lal Shaha, Ananta Mohan Das, men who had suffered rigorous imprisonment so cheerfully. The speaker had one message to communicate to the youngmen, the sole message and that message was this. As they went back to their homes they should disperse themselves among their

homes, they should disperse themselves among their neighbours and make themselves missionaries of this new gospel of the Swadeshi cause (cheers). The youngmen had four months before them. They should on their return home form organizations and societies like Anti-Circular Society of which his young friend (pointing to Babu Sachindra Prasad Bose, Secretary of the Society) was the prop and the pillar. What had that Society done? Young, respectable men, graduates and under-graduates, with loads of Swadeshi articles on their back went about hawking from door to door. They vindicated the capacities of man. The speaker asked his audience: Are you prepared to do so?" (cries of Yes). He knew that they were prepared to do so. But there was something more. They should abstain from the purchase and use of foreign articles and persuade others to do likewise. The speaker asked them to go from door to door as missionaries of the new dispensation and persuade their neighbours. Marvellous, irresistible, invincible was its power—the power of the tongue, illuminated by divine fire, was irresistible. A great Irish orator said—"let me have time and let me talk and I will conquer the Universe." So the speaker emphatically declared that the youngmen would be invincible irresistible and all-conquering. They knew what the twelve illiterate, ignorant disciples of Jesus Christ did—ignorant men, absolutely unfamiliar with any language of the world, they were the most eloquent speakers of their time. They preached and Christianity became the religion of civilized humanity.

The speaker asked the graduates and under-graduates before him if they would not be able to persuade their neighbours to follow the Swadeshi creed? The speaker had no doubt they would. The youngmen could refuse to marry into the families which made use of foreign articles. This was within their power. They could refuse as brothers-in-law or son-in-law, to receive presents which had the stamp of foreigners upon them. If they did

so, the speaker was perfectly certain that the Swadeshi cause was bound to succeed. The speaker went on to say "go forth, youngmen, as missionaries of the new faith, with a solemn conviction in your minds that upon you depend the destinies of your country. The future is in your hands. Go forth with this solemn conviction—spread far and wide the gospel of this new creed. I promise you that in the course of the next year the Swadeshi cult would not only become the general cult of Bengal, but be adopted as the religion and the political and industrial creed of India. This is the glorious mission. Be not afraid of the powers—be not afraid of the terrors of the whip. If you go into prison you will enroll yourselves amongst the martyrs of the world." The speaker concluded by saying that within the limits of law they had a large scope of action. He asked the youngmen to use their powers of persuasion, and the Swadeshi Movement was bound to succeed. The industrial development of the country would be an accomplished fact, and with that, their political emancipation would also be achieved. Whether the Partition of Bengal was undone or not, they were determined to hold up the Swadeshi Banner.

The speaker invoked the blessings of God upon the youngmen. The speaker then showed some yarns of 30 counts, made in a Charka by some women of Pabna with their own hands, and expressed the hope that the youngmen were all in a position to produce yarns like that; so he asked them to go to their homes and tell their mothers, sisters and wives to produce similar yarns. They urged them to tell their sisters and wives to cast aside the wretched novels, which some of them read. If they took to the ancient industry of Charka plenty would henceforth shine upon the land.



## IN MEMORY OF BABU JOGENDRA CHANDRA BOSE.

*August 1906.*

Babu Surendranath Banerjea said that when he was asked by his friend Babu Panchcowri Banerjea to preside at the function, he cheerfully complied with the request. He might say that he unhesitatingly accepted the offer and was glad to have an opportunity of testifying his regard for the memory of one between whom and the speaker himself there were many divergences in respect of political ideals and aspirations and even in respect of the details of their political programme. In the presence of the open tomb, passion of political controversies should be hushed into silence; and the exposition of charity, love, devotion and admiration alone should be heard. He, therefore, accepted the request of his friend and consented to preside at the function. He had known the late Babu Jogendra Chandra Bose somewhere in the early eighties. They were both young at that time and were both inspired by that ardour and devotion which youth alone could inspire. They were linked together in the bond of a common cause. They went to Berhampore as delegates or missionaries; and they found themselves in the small hours of the morning at the Railway Station at Nalhati. Both of them were hungry and the speaker, perhaps, was the hungrier of the two. There was no food available either for love or money. Babu Jogendra Chandra sallied forth and aroused shopkeepers from their beds and got the speaker some food and both of them were refreshed. The speaker related this instance in order to characterise this doggedness and determination of the late illustrious deceased. The speaker thought that he was not guilty of the slightest exaggeration when he said that the late Babu Jogendra Chandra Bose might be regarded as the father of cheap modern Bengalee journalism (cheers). "Sulava Samachar," of course preceded the "*Bangabashi*." It was

the work of great Keshab Chandra Sen, whose memory they all revered. It was a splendid paper in its days and the gratitude of the people was due to the great person who called it into existence. But the paper was now defunct. It failed because it was not placed on a basis of financial solvency. Finance was the backbone of every undertaking. Babu Jogendra Chandra realized the situation and he made the "*Bangabashi*" a financial success and thus placed cheap vernacular journalism upon a sound and satisfactory basis; and what was the result? Soon after the *Bangabashi* they had had very useful and very widely circulated and important vernacular journals. Therefore the speaker was right in calling the late Babu Jogendra Chandra Bose the father of cheap vernacular journalism. (Cheers).

All the country was being galvanized with the great movement of which the people were all devotees and worshippers; the speaker meant the Swadeshi Movement which was the life of every Indian, whether he was a Hindu or Mahomedan. That was very largely due to the diffusion of ideals, brought about by the cheap vernacular journals—*Bangabashi*, *Hitabadi*, *Sanjibani*, *Basumati*, and other journals; and there were a host of them, which he needed not mention, were doing at this critical moment, excellent services to the country. The speaker asked the audience to bear in mind that the services were largely due to the energies and the organising powers of him whose memory they were met to honour. Babu Jogendra Chandra having started the "*Bangabashi*" was not content merely with the vernacular paper. He published it also in Hindi. He introduced the system of giving *upahar* (presents) by which he became exceedingly popular. Hindu sastras were published by the illustrious deceased at very small costs; it had been sometimes said that Babu Jogendra Chandra was not given to political agitation. But the speaker emphatically

declared "every newspaper writer is an agitator and cannot but be an agitator. If he writes a weekly paper he agitates once a week. If he writes a daily paper he agitates once every day in his life."

Continuing the speaker said Babu Jogendra Chandra identified himself with the strong agitation against the Age of Consent Bill and the Municipal Act. The speaker was perfectly convinced that if his life had been spared he would have been a foremost agitator in connection with the Swadeshi Movement. The speaker was justified in this observation ; for in the year 1890, he had preached the Swadeshi cause. It was sometimes believed that the Swadeshi Movement was the outcome of Partition of Bengal. He gave the lie to this belief saying the movement had been in existence for a very long time prior to the Partition of Bengal.

The memory of the late Babu Jogendra Chandra deserved commemoration. One by one the people were losing their great and distinguished men. In July last, the country had mourned the death of Mr. W. C. Bonnerjea, on previous evening passed away from its sphere of existence one of the sweetest, gentlest and noblest natures. The speaker meant Mr. A. M. Bose. He looked upon this as a personal bereavement. For 30 years he had been a companion in arms fighting side by side with the speaker ; and in this way from time to time the speaker and his countrymen were called upon to commemorate their memories. The *Bangabashi* is a monument to the memory of the late Babu Jogendra Chandra. He was glad that his mantle had fallen upon his two sons and hoped that they would worthily maintain the success and distinction which belonged to the *Bangabashi*,—they would make the paper the voice and organ of public opinion in the Province—public opinion of a progressive people which was seeking to combine what was manly.

and noble and what was worthy of imitation for a civilized people. The speaker invoked blessings upon the *Bangabashi* saying "May the *Bangabashi*, the work of Jogendra Chandra grow and flourish, which represents the hope and aspiration of this great gathering which I have the honour to address. I will say no more. We wish every success to the *Bangabashi* and the native journals which were doing such admirable services to the country. The powers may frown upon them—they may be persecuted. They may be despised. But let them bear in mind that behind them are the 80 millions of their countrymen, ready to support them in their trials and visitations."

## BABU SURENDRA NATH BANERJEA

### ON "SWADESHISM"

*December, 1906.*

Babu Surendra Nath Banerjea rose to speak amidst the deafening cries of "Bande Mataram." He said. Gentlemen,—Notwithstanding the encomium which has been bestowed upon me by my friend to my left (Mr. Tilak) who has just told you that I possess a motor voice—(laughter)—I almost despair—notwithstanding this gift—of making myself heard by this vast gathering. Nothing was more gratifying to me than the shouts of "Bande Mataram" (loud cries "Bande Mataram") with which you welcomed me on my arrival here. It is our national cry (hear, hear), (loud cries of "Bande Mataram")—not our battle cry (laughter) but the cry of peace, good-will and harmony among the different Indian races. (Hear hear). It is not a militant appeal to the Goddess Kali to lead us to victory against the English (laughter)—but a soft, generous and fervent patriotic effusion reminding us of our great duty to our Motherland (hear, hear).

Gentlemen, this meeting has been convened under the auspices of the "Swadeshi Bastu Pracharini Sabha" which flourished under the distinguished auspices of my patriotic friend who sits to my right (Dr. Deshmukh.) So great has been the stimulus which the preachings of this Sabha have imparted to the Swadeshi cause that I understand it is under contemplation to open an "Indian Store" with a capital of three lakhs of rupees, and it is proposed that India's Grand Old Man Mr. Naoroji—(loud applause) should be accorded the honour of opening the Store when he comes here to preside (hear, hear) over the deliberation of the Congress. I further understand from the brief conversation I have had with my friend when I was coming here that it is the youngmen who form the pillars and the support of the "Swadeshi Bastu Pracharini Sabha." So it must always be. In the early years of the dawn the voices of children heard the loudest ; so in the dawn of nation's birth, the voices of young are heard high above the jarring notes of strife and discord. (Hear, hear). In Bengal it is the young who have held aloft the banner of the Swadeshi Movement. (Hear hear). It is the youngmen who were in the forefront and who have been our martyrs in the Swadeshi cause. (Hear, hear.) Let me here repeat an incident which went straight to my heart. Three months ago as I was sitting in the Bengalee office, attending to my duties, there came a lad as high as that (pointing with his hand to the height of the boy by holding him at a certain distance from the ground). He was about 16 or 17 years old ; I said : " Who are you " ?—for I have always had the tenderest feelings for our boys (Hear, hear). I asked him : " Who are you, what brings you here ; what is your work ; how may I help you in that work " ? He said " I am Rajendralal Saha " (Tremendous applause). Rajendralal Shaha was a name that was familiar to me, it was the name of a young martyr (Hear, hear). I asked him what had brought him

to Calcutta. He said that his appeal case had been heard at the High Court, that the case had been decided against him and that he was going back to jail to serve out his time.

He said that with more calmness and freedom from fervour than what I am displaying at this moment. (Hear, hear). I said : " Are you sorry ?" He said " No, I rejoice that it has been permitted to me to serve my country." (Hear, hear and loud cries of Bande Mataram). That was the man who was cordially received by the inhabitants of Mymensingh the other day when they turned out in their hundreds near the precincts of the jail. But they were beaten and belaboured by a cowardly Police (Loud cries of "Shame") I say "cowardly" deliberately with the full sense of my responsibility—"cowardly" in the sense that the police knew perfectly well that the mandate of the leaders was that they were to suffer in silence and never, under any circumstances, to commit any breaches of the Law (Hear, hear). The police knew perfectly well that the boys would not return blow for blow. It was relying upon this sense of security that they attacked these youngmen. Don't you call that "cowardly" when you attack a man in the full consciousness that he will not return blow for blow ? Well, then youngmen as you are, be ready to serve your motherland in this great movement and support it with all the fervour and enthusiasm that you are capable of. Don't for one moment accept the principle which is sought to be enforced in these days that students ought to have no concern whatever with Swadeshism. (Shame). Dismiss it as a delusion and as a myth which is manufactured to mislead you. There is no nobler school of apprenticeship for the young than the school of Swadeshism. (Hear, hear). Therefore gather round this movement in your hundreds, in your thousands, and in your ten of thousands. Above all, strive to prove your Mahratta courage, pluck, heroism and self-sacrifice. Nay more, carry with you in this onward progressive march other communities now linked together with you by

an inseparable destiny. Let Gujratis, Mahomedans, Mah-rattas, Bhatias,—all sections of the community, no matter what your political differences may be—gather together under the all embracing banner of Swadeshism (Hear, hear).

I wish to address a word of appeal, perhaps a word of re-monstrance to the piece-goods merchants of Bombay. (Laugh-ter). Bombay has a great destiny before her in connection with the Swadeshi Movement. (Hear, hear). The inspiration may have come from Bengal, but the consummation and the accomplishment of the movement lies with you, the people of Bombay. (Hear, hear). You can make or mar the fortunes of this movement. You have your great Mills here—in Bombay, Ahmednagar, Sholapur, Ahmedabad and other places too numerous to be mentioned. (Cheers). You are manufacturers of large quantities of piece-goods which you place on the market. My earnest advice to you is—and will you excuse the impertinence of a layman in giving advice to the mercantile community—(laughter)—my earnest advice to you is to capture the markets of India by modera-ting your prices. I may tell you a case which occurs to me at the present moment. Many years ago we had the Tudor Ice Company in Calcutta. They were monopolists. Another Company was started. Then what did the Tudor Company do? It immediately lowered its prices and kept them at a low figure until the financial resources of the rival Company were exhausted, and then it had again the ancient monopoly (Laughter).

I ask you not exactly to imitate their conduct but to recognise the principle that underlies it. In connection with the Swadeshi Movement the economic aspect of the ques-tion can never be overlooked. Cheapness must in the long run assert itself. If there is any disparity in respect of prices between your piece-goods and the piece-goods of foreign countries and if that disparity is to your prejudice, then the effect of it would be to scare away purchasers, and you to that extent interfere with the expansion of the

Swadeshi Movement. It was made a matter of complaint the year before last, during the Pūjas of 1905, that the Bombay mill-owners had enormously raised their prices, and when I wrote back here to make enquiries I found that the statement was true. I think it was a great pity—I won't use a harsher word—unpatriotic was the word which had come to my lips—(Hear, hear and laughter)—that they should have raised their prices amid the exigencies of a national crisis. That is the first word of advice that I have to address to the merchants of Bombay. In the next place, I would ask you to expand the sphere of the Swadeshi Movement and open Swadeshi Stores in various parts of the country. I understand that there are places where there is only one Swadeshi shop as against half-a-dozen videshi shops. (Laughter and cries of Shame). Why should the number not be transposed? (Hear, hear). Have half-a-dozen Swadeshi shops as against one videshi shop. (Hear hear). In our part of the country there are Marwary merchants (Laughter). I have great respect for them. (Hear, hear). Do you know how we tackle them? We approach them in the spirit of compromise. Compromise is the law of the universe. Nature makes her compromises and why should not man do likewise? We tell the Marwaries: "You have got half-a-dozen bideshi shops; will you kindly reduce them by one-half? Let there be three bideshi shops and three Swadeshi shops. We shall see that your Swadeshi shop prosper and flourish, and the local leaders help you." (Hear, hear). The Swadeshi tide has set in; it is irresistible; it is not in the power of any one to set it back. No, that is impossible. Let our merchants flow with the tide and it is then alone that they will retain that position of affluence and influence which they possess at present. (Hear hear). That is my earnest advice to them.

I have heard our movement described "the so-called Swadeshi movement." I have heard it thus described by high officials—one of the highest—not Lord Minto (laughter)—



for His Excellency I have the highest possible respect. I have heard the Swadeshi movement described as "the so-called Swadeshi movement" by high officials and by the representatives of the Anglo-Indian press (cries of Shame). I have no quarrel with them. Personally I have none. On public grounds I may have (Hear, hear and laughter). But when they commit mistakes we are bound to point out their errors. I confess I don't quite understand what is meant by the expression "the so-called Swadeshi movement." But I may make guess. What perhaps is implied is that ours is really a political movement masked under an economic guise (Laughter). If I am right in this interpretation I will say this that the description is both inadequate and misleading. Swadeshism is, or more properly speaking, was, until its more recent developments a purely economic movement which, in the particular circumstances of our province, received an impetus from political considerations. Swadeshism came into being long before even Lord Curzon assumed the reins of office (Hear, hear). Its existence was ignored amid the tumultuous distractions of our political controversies. While other and more ephemeral movements monopolised public attention, the infant Hercules was growing in strength and stature, laying for itself a rich reserve fund of energy which was to qualify it for its marvellous achievements in the future. (Applause). The infant Hercules has now grown into years of adolescence and his labours have just begun. (Hear hear). I have heard the Swadeshi movement described as being in the domain of economics what the Congress is in the domain of politics. I venture to think it is a good deal more than that (Laughter). It is not merely an economic or a social or a political movement, but it is an all-comprehensive movement—(hear, hear)—co-extensive with the entire circle of our national life, and in which are centred the many-sided—activities of our growing community. (Hear, hear).

It seems to me as if some beneficent spirit had whisper-

ed into the ears of the genius of our motherland this *Shibboleth* of our unity and industrial and political salvation. It is the rallying cry of all India, of her multitudinous races and peoples. It appeals to all—high and low, rich and poor. It is understood by all. The Deccan peasant or the Bengalee rustic may find some difficulty in understanding the merits of a system of representative Government. The subtleties of the question involved in the separation of judicial from executive functions may elude the grasp of his untrained mind. But when you tell him that the wealth of the country must be kept in the country that it is to his advantage that it should be so kept and that for this purpose he must purchase country-made articles in preference to foreign articles, he opens wide his eyes and ears and drinks in the lesson. A glow of intelligence illumines his features ; hope for the moment chases away the settled melancholy of his countenance, and he recognises that herein lies the solution of what to him is the problem of problems, the removal of the poverty of himself and of his class. He stands by you and salutes you as his deliverer. (Hear, hear).

Gentlemen, fifteen months ago my late lamented friend, Mr. A. M. Bose—(Hear, hear) whose memory you respect and whose name I revere and adore, had a conversation in connection with the partition question with a high official of the Government. That official said to my friend : “ Mr. Bose, if the masses were to interest themselves in public affairs, the Government of this country would have to be conducted upon totally different principles.” We are resolved to bring the masses and the classes together (hear hear) and to associate them with us in our political agitations. We are resolved to liberalise this great Government and broaden it upon the foundations of the willing loyalty and the devoted allegiance of the people (Hear, hear). That represents the goal of our aspirations. I desire the Anglo-Indian

community to note the fact that the tide of union between the classes and the masses which has set in with such force is a decree from the hands of Almighty Providence. (Hear, hear.) None can resist it. The Congress has brought the educated community throughout the country upon the same platform. Swadeshism will bring the classes and the masses upon the same platform. (Hear, hear). Swadeshism is of Divine origin (cheers). The Swadeshi leaders are humble instruments in the hands of Divine Providence walking under the illumination of His Holy spirit. (Hear, hear). Call it superstition, call it fanaticism, reckon us as being among the deluded maniacs of mankind, but you have read the lesson of History in vain if you do not recognise the fact that men working under such a conviction and fortified by such a belief will dare all and do all. (Hear hear). That is the spirit which animates us. (cheers). Being of Divine origin Swadeshism is based upon the love of country and not the hatred of the foreigner. (Hear, hear). I know the statement will at once be challenged. (Laughter). It will be said Swadeshism has accentuated the acerbities of racial antagonism. If it has done so, we are guiltless. (Hear, hear). We are in no way responsible for it. (Hear, hear). We have been the persecuted rather than the persecutors. We have suffered, but we have not retaliated. I fail to see wherein the element of racial hatred comes in at all. If you don't choose to purchase an article manufactured by me, does it follow that you hate me ! (A voice, No.) With similar consistency you may say that because you don't choose to eat food cooked by me, therefore you hate me. (Hear, hear and laughter). Absolutely no sort of racial antagonism or strife is involved in Swadeshism. (Hear, hear). Further in the domain of the emotions, the possession of particular quality involves the negation of its opposite. Love of justice involves the hatred of injustice. Love of truth involves the hatred of falsehood. Love of the goods of one's own country necessarily involves a dislike—I will not

say hatred—of the goods of a foreign country. (Hear, hear). If there is an element of dislike, are we responsible for it? (Laughter). It is inherent in the very nature of things. Your appeal must be to the Great Creator of this Universe against the necessary and natural order of things. Therefore once again I say that Swadeshism is based upon the love of country. (Hear, hear). Our object is to popularise the use of indigenous articles, to foster the growth and development of indigenous arts and industries and to safeguard the country against the growing evils of impoverishment (cheers).

Ours is one of the poorest countries in the world—so poor that there is none to do her obeisance. She is no longer the country which once excited the cupidity of foreign conquerors—a country whose pristine splendour brought down upon her fertile plains the marauding hordes from the arid steppes of Central Asia. Her days of prosperity are gone—I hope not for ever. (Hear, hear). Our Poverty is accentuated by the drains—the official drain and the commercial drain. The official drain consists of the Home Charges. I may say that until there is a further expansion of the Legislative Councils and we have a potent voice over the public expenditure, the official drain will continue unchecked and undiminished. The commercial drain is a factor which we can grapple with at once. (Hear, hear). We spend about 50 crores of Rupees every year in purchasing foreign articles. In Bengal, Gentlemen, we spend about 16 crores every year upon the purchase of foreign-manufactured piece-goods. Our population is 8 crores ; therefore, independently of the taxes which we pay to the British Government we pay a poll-tax of Rs. 2 per head, (Laughter). We are resolved to put an end to this poll-tax. (Hear hear). And I ask you to help us to do so. (Hear, hear).

Gentlemen, I fear I have already exhausted your patience. (Cries, from all sides, of “ No, no, go on.”)

If I have not exhausted your patience—(laughter)—at any rate, I am approaching the time when the cock crows—(laughter)—and it will be necessary for me to bid you farewell. (Laughter).

Swadeshism, as I have observed, is an all comprehensive movement. In Bengal it has revolutionised our ideals and conceptions. The air is surcharged with the industrial spirit. The craze for service has received a check. The spirit of self-reliance is abroad. We are making an earnest and organised effort to place education, general and technical, under national control and conduct it in accordance with national ideals and aspirations. All this represents the trend of things in Bengal. The Bengal of to-day—Bengal after the partition is a very different place from Bengal before the partition. (Hear hear). As I have referred to the partition I may perhaps for a moment be permitted to allude to that which fills the heart of every patriotic Bengalee. Mr. Morley has told us that the partition is 'a settled fact.' (Laughter). We decline to accept what is a wrong, a grievous wrong, an outrage upon public sentiment as among the varieties of life and administration. The wrong must be undone. All nature cries out against it. The order of the universe is arrayed against it. It is a lie and we must all combine to undo it. You are assembled here in your thousands. My earnest appeal to you all is to sympathise and to co-operate with us in undoing that which is the most grievous injury that we have suffered in the whole course of our connection with England. I pray you to give a mandate to the delegates that you are sending to the National Congress that this shall be the first and the foremost question to be considered. (Hear, hear.) Make it an all India question. (Hear hear). It is not a question affecting a mere territorial redistribution. The issues are much graver than that. The question is whether the public opinion of a great province is to be flouted and treated with undisguised contempt in a matter which

vitality affects the interests of that province. It is in another form and in a different garb the old question of the assertion of popular opinion, the vindication of the principle of self-government. (Hear, hear).

I will not detain you much longer. If I have not exhausted your patience I certainly have exhausted mine (cries from all sides "Go on.") In conclusion, I would make an earnest appeal to you once again on behalf of Swadeshism. Gather round the Swadeshi movement and uplift its banner. (Hear hear). Carry it from village to village, from town to town and from district to district—spread the glad tidings of great joy throughout the length and breadth of this great Presidency. Swadeshism will save us from famine and pestilence and the nameless horrors which follow in the train of poverty. (Hear, hear). Take the Swadeshi vow and you will have laid broad and deep the foundations of your industrial and political emancipation. (Hear hear.) Be Swadeshi in all things in your thoughts and actions, in your ideals and aspirations. Bring back the ancient days of purity and self-sacrifice. Restore the Aryavarta of olden times when the Rishis sang the praises of God and did good to men. (Cheers). All Asia is astir with the pulsations of a new life. The sun has risen in the East. Japan has saluted the rising sun. That sun in its meridian splendour will pass through our country. (Hear, hear). Oh, prepare yourselves for the advent of that glorious day (Hear, hear). Dedicate yourselves with absolute self-denial to the service of your motherland. Let us consecrate ourselves to the service of this great and ancient land. Let all differences be buried, all strifes and animosities allayed, and let the jarring notes of party dissensions be hushed in the presence of the prostrate form of our motherland. Swadeshism does not exclude foreign ideals or foreign learning or foreign arts and industries, but insists that they shall be assimilated into the national system, be moulded after the national pattern and be incorporated into the life of the nation. Such is my con-

ception of Swadeshism. Once again, in the name of Swadeshism; I ask you to take the Swadeshi vow from this day forward you will devote yourselves life and soul to the service of your motherland. (Hear, hear) Live and die for her—(Hear, hear)—and may God and your Country be glorified. “Bande Mataram.” (Loud applause.)

## CONGRESS AT CALCUTTA.

### THE PARTITION OF BENGAL.

*December, 1906.*

Babu Surendranath Banerjee who, on rising was received with loud and prolonged cheers and cries of *Bande Mataram* seconded the resolution. In doing so, he said :—

Mr. President, Your Highness, ladies and gentlemen,

The resolution has not yet been placed before you, and I desire to do so with the permission of the President. In deference to the Bengalee feeling, we have made a slight alteration in the resolution. My friend, Babu Matilal Ghose gave notice of an amendment in connection with this resolution. After consultation with our Bengalee friends and having ascertained their opinions, we have accepted his amendment (cheers) and all reference to the commission of enquiry will be deleted (cheers and shouts of *Bande Mataram*). I will, therefore, now read the Resolution as amended ;—

“ That this Congress again records its emphatic protest against the Partition of Bengal and regrets that the present Government, while admitting that there were errors in the original plan and that it went wholly and decisively against the wishes of the majority of the people of Bengal, is disposed to look upon it as a settled fact, inspite of the earnest and persistent protest of the people and their manifest disinclination to accept it as final.

“ That this Congress, composed of representatives from all the provinces of this country, desires earnestly to impress upon the British Parliament and the present Liberal Go-

vernment that it will be not only just but expedient to reverse or modify the Partition in such a manner, as to keep the entire Bengali-speaking community under one undivided administration and thus to restore contentment to so important a province as Bengal."

Sir, I think this Congress is to be congratulated upon the singular piece of good fortune in having obtained the admission of that illustrious representative of a great and princely family (cheers) in the capital of the new Province to this resolution (hear, hear). Henceforth, Nawab Athi-kulla,—(cheers) the worthy son of a worthy father, who surrendered his princely patrimony in obedience to fraternal feeling—henceforth this distinguished representative of a great and princely family will be recognised as our Captain-General in the campaign against the Partition.

Under his leadership, under his guidance, guided by his prestige and the greatness associated with his honoured name, we hope to triumph in this memorable campaign (cheers). Sir, it is our misfortune that it should be necessary for us from year to year, to appeal to your indulgence to accord to this question, a leading place in your deliberations. I know not how long this necessity will last. But this I do know, that, so long as the Partition is not reversed or modified, the Bengali-speaking community will never be satisfied (loud cheers,) and that, no matter what concessions may be granted in other directions, they will not conciliate our people or allay their prevailing excitement (hear, hear).

Sir, we are told from time to time, that there is a lull in the agitation, a subsidence of the feeling which has prompted it. The other day, I was reading a letter which has appeared in the *Times* from a correspondent in India in which that correspondent observed that the agitation was on the wane. Sir, we are in the unfortunate position of a patient suffering from a painful disease in which there are periods of intermission but the patient



knows no rest or peace so long as the root-cause of the mischief lies ingrained in his constitution (hear, hear). Time blunts the edge of all sorrow. Time is our great healer. But time with its mollifying hands has not been able to soothe our wants. There it is festering in the depths of our hearts. There is no feeling deeper in the heart of the Bengalee than that which is associated with the home and which gathers round the domestic circle. The Bengalee, be he a Hindu or a Mahomedan, feels the strongest repugnance to the breaking-up of his home ; he relents with a fanaticism which is religious in its intensity. With equal pain and resentment does he view this separation from himself of his kith and kin, by the formation of a separate legislature and a separate Government. The Partition is in the nature of an outrage upon the deepest domestic associations (hear, hear). Call it a mere sentiment—an irrational sentiment, if you like ; but there it is,—nobody can ignore it—moving the heart of our people with a power and intensity to which there is no parallel in the annals of our popular upheavals. That is not merely a sentimental consideration. There are deeper issues. They affect the whole of India. They concern what with us is the problem of problems, namely, the question of Self-government. If it were a question of territorial redistribution, all this excitement and irritation would be inexplicable. But the consideration is far more serious than that. The question is this :—

Brother delegates, from the rest of India, I desire to draw your special attention to it.—The question is this : Whether the public opinion of a great province, expressed with singular unanimity and unequal emphasis, is to be flouted and treated with open and disguised contempt in a matter affecting the vital well-being of that Province (" Shame"). Thus, in another form, in another garb, we have the old, old question of the assertion of popular opinion and the vindication of the principle of Self-Government. It is in this form and in this sense that the question appeals with

convincing force to the heart and conscience of the whole of India. Brother delegates, last year about this time, when we discussed this question, the Liberal Government had come into power, with Mr. Morley as Secretary of State for India. We had never known Mr. Morley in that capacity. We knew him more as an author than as a statesman. We knew him better—at any rate, I knew him better—as the biographer of Cobden and Burke, as the author of *Compromise*, than as the radical politician or the Chief Secretary for Ireland. Many of us had, indeed, sat at his feet, in the sense that we had imbibed from his writings those lessons of political wisdom dominated by the higher considerations of expediency, which have their roots in the eternal moralities of things. We, therefore, hailed our political *Guru* as the controller of the destinies of our motherland; we hailed him, welcomed him to the place, to the seat of the great AKBAR, in the full confidence that he would fill it with more than the wisdom, with scarcely less than the beneficence, of the greatest of the Mogul Emperors. If, perhaps, our expectations were pitched too high Mr. Morley is responsible for it. For, who can read his writings or rise from their perusal, without coming to the conclusion, that here is a master-figure in the world of thought and action, (cheers, hear, hear), and that his caution was but another name for that temper of mind, which gathers in the forces of action preliminary to a determined and vigorous effort. We realised the difficulties of his situation and were prepared to make large allowances for that undiluted bureaucratic atmosphere, which he breathes every moment of his life, and in which he might be said to live and move and have his being. For of all the bureaucracies, which govern or misgovern countries (hear, hear), the stiffest, the most reactionary, the slowest to move, the one, above all others, gifted with the fatal gift of a superabundance of confidence in its own infallibility, is the bureaucracy installed at the India Office. But all the same, people expected that a man

of Mr. Morley's capacity and judgment, with his great influence over the country and the House, would rise superior to his environments, assert his personality and vindicate those lofty principles of Political Wisdom and Justice, which are inseparably associated with his honoured name.

Sir, we have been asked to wait, and that, by no other person than Sir William Wedderburn (cheers), one of the staunchest friends of the people of India and the same advice has been emphasised by another distinguished friend in India, whom I am looking out for, on the platform and whom I miss and whose sympathy for India and Indian aspirations is so well-known—I mean the Right Hon'ble Mr. Samuel Smith. (cheers). We have been asked to wait. Wait we must ; what else can we do? Waiting upon the will of our rulers has been our lot for the last three centuries. We shall certainly wait ; but not in meek submission to the will of our rulers as the decree of an inexorable fate, but with the firm resolve to overcome that fate and work out our salvation (hear, hear).

Our rulers must recognise the new spirit born, it may be, of the huge blunder of the Partition, vibrating through our hearts, up-lifting us to a higher plane of political effort. (cheers). We were, sirs, no longer Orientals, of the old type (hear, hear), content to grovel under the weight of an overmastering fate (hear hear) but we are Orientals, Your Highness, of the new school, enfranchised by English culture and English influences, revived by the example of China, Japan (cheers) and last but not the least, of Persia, and as Orientals of the new school, we believe, that nations by themselves are made. (Cheers and shouts of *Bande Mataram*). Yes, we shall wait with patience, but it will not be the patience of inaction, but patience accompanied by vigorous, dauntless, self-sacrificing effort to undo that gigantic blunder and cruel wrong of the partition of Bengal. Mr. Morley declines to re-open the question on the ground that the Partition is a settled fact (cheers). We, in our turn, decline

to accept it as a settled fact ; we decline to accept a wrong—admitted to be wrong—an outrageous and deliberate insult upon the opinions of our people, as among the verities of our life and our administration. Mr. President, you have, through a long course of distinguished services of self-dedication to the interests of your country, noted the triumphs of truth and justice in this world, even in connection with the attitude and the policy of reactionary Government. A wrong is a lie and as such, it is opposed to the mandate of the Omnipotent and is in conflict with the moral order of the Universe. It cannot endure in this world of eternal verities. We are bound to undo it. And if we persist, go on continuing this agitation, the Partition is doomed, foredoomed to withdrawal. Mr. Morley, let it be said to his credit, does not adduce any justification for the Partition. He makes two significant admissions—that it went wholly and decisively against the wishes of the majority of the people concerned and that there were errors in the original plan. With these admissions, it is difficult to see how Mr. Morley can long stand where he is. We have only to give him a push, a persistent push, from year to year and I think we will dislodge him from that position (laughter) ! A statesman is not bound to be logical and that is what Mr. Morley himself has said (laughter) ! Read his *Life of Burke* and you will find that it is so. He says that a statesman is not bound to be logical, but, I take it, that he is bound to be reasonable. If it were any other person I should have used the word *rational*, but I will not do so. He is bound to be reasonable, he is bound to be just, he cannot overcome the paramount claims of right-doing.

Righteousness exalteth a nation (hear, hear) ; righteousness is the very vital breath of Imperial statesmen. The most reactionary of Indian Viceroys has told us that the British Government is based upon the eternal moralities of things. The most reactionary of Indian Law-makers—I do not know how it is, but the most reactionary of men in their

practical politics, are the most liberal in their profession of politics—the most reactionary of Indian Law-makers—do you know who that is?—some of us have had practical experience of him, the author of the Sedition Clause in the Penal Code—he has said from his place in the Imperial Legislative Council that a single act of conscious injustice done in India is more disastrous to the British rule than a great reverse sustained upon an Asiatic battle-field.

A wrong has been committed, and the Government itself has admitted it as such, and it is felt by the people as such. To perpetuate it and not to rectify it would be disastrous to the credit of the British rule. It will do more than anything else I can think of, to shake the popular confidence, the bulwark of States and Thrones in the justice and integrity of the Government. What is the Government for, if it will not rectify a wrong? That is the highest ambition, the noblest function of all Governments. It is their sacred duty to redress wrongs. Liberalism is wedded to progress. Progress involves the unsettling of the existing 'order of things. What has the Government been doing recently? Upsetting the educational policy of their predecessors, unsettling a settled fact. Mr. Morley admits that there are errors in the original plan. I take it, that if the Partition is to be a permanent institution and if there are errors in original plan, are they to find an abiding place in a permanent arrangement, fraught with the happiness and misery of millions of people? The position is so irrational that even the *Pioneer* is constrained to say that, in the light of this admission, Mr. Morley himself has no option left to him but to reconsider the whole question. The *Pioneer* says that no question of temporary convenience can be made an excuse for perpetuating errors, and the right course would be to amend the Partition at once. But Mr. Morley's attitude is determined by the larger considerations of expediency. What those considerations are, he has not been pleased to tell us. He was challenged to state them by

Mr. O'Donnell from his place in the *House of Commons*. But he did not accept the challenge. Are we then, to be driven to the conclusion that they are not such, as will bear the light of publicity and the test of scrutiny ?

Brother delegates, differing, as I do, from Mr. Morley's views, I desire to meet him on his own ground and I hold that even upon considerations of political expediency, he is bound to undo or modify the Partition. Is not the contentment of the people, an asset of some importance to the Government ? Sir, in the case of a foreign Government, such as ours, it is an asset of priceless value. Her Gracious Majesty the late Queen-Empress is my authority for it. For, in that gracious Proclamation of the 1st November 1858, which represents the high water-mark of British statesmanship of the last generation, she said in the concluding words of Her Proclamation, that the strength of Her Empire lay in the contentment of Her people. The partition of Bengal strikes the root of that contentment. It has caused wide-spread dissatisfaction, it has alienated the people from the rulers (hear, hear). There could be no practical co-operation between them, when there is this yawning gulf. I will cite an illustration in point. I hope I have not tired your patience. (cries of "no, no").

The other day, a high official of the Indian Government visited Rajshahi in the new province with a view to found a Co-operative Credit Society. The help of the local leaders was invoked. But they refused point-blank to co-operate with him. The local correspondent of one of the newspapers of Calcutta wrote that the people had lost all confidence in the Government (hear hear). Lo and behold ! this is one of the fruits of the Partition. Mr. Morley wants new facts for him to reconsider the question. I present him with this. Here is fact No. 1. There are one or two more facts that I have to present to him.

A section of our people have lost all confidence in the utility of constitutional agitation, (hear, hear) ; they

say that they decline to approach the Government with memorials and petitions. They say what is the good of them all. Here, in the matter of Partition we have begged and prayed and protested, and entreated, the arts of sycophancy have been put into fullest requisition. But all in vain. They say, that self-respect demands that they should have nothing whatever to do with the Government (cries of *Bande Mataram*). I may say, gentlemen, that I am not in sympathy with that view at all. I think that the political agitation must be continued and I further think that petitions should be submitted. You may say 'no' to the end of your life ; and you will not convince me that in this matter I am in the wrong. We are agreeing to differ there. Whatever that matter may be, there is the fact that a class has sprung up in our midst who do not believe in petitioning or praying to Government and who do not believe in constitutional agitation. This is the fruit No. 2 of Partition which may be laid before Mr. Morley (cheers). I have got another new fact to lay before Mr. Morley and that shall be the last.

In the new province, before Partition was carried out, Hindus and Mahomedans in most of the districts were living in the utmost cordiality and peace. In some districts—I am glad to be able to say, not in all—the relations have somewhat changed. I do not enter into the various causes that have brought them about. There is the fact, fruit No. 3, the difference between Hindus and Mahomedans caused by the Partition.

Gentlemen, this brings me to the question of the attitude of Mahomedans of India with regard to the Partition. Let me tell you that, before the Partition was carried out, with the solitary exception of Nawab Salimulla (cries of "shame"), everybody, Hindu and Mahomedan, was opposed to the Partition. (A cry, "so was Nawab Samimulla.") That correction, I accept. He was opposed, I remember now, to the smaller scheme of Partition but since the large scheme was introduced and when he discovered

he would be the premier. nobleman of the new province, then there came a sudden change in him. *That I think represents the true state of facts.* The Mahomedan community were opposed to Partition and nothing has happened, since then, to bring about a change in the attitude of the Mahomedans in India, except that they have got a few more appointments in the ministerial subordinate police and executive service. Has the cause of Mahomedan education received an impetus ? (Cries of "No"). Of course not Is sanitation better looked after ? (Cries of "No"). Mahomedans have no reason to be satisfied with the Partition, and as a matter of fact, they do not support it. I will bring forward a few facts.

There were no less than 259 anti-Partition demonstrations held in connection with the celebration of 16th October last. Out of this 259, at 135 meetings Hindus and Mahomedans joined for the purpose of protesting against the Partition (cheers). But that is not all. The foremost important anti-Partition meetings were those, held in Calcutta, Dacca, Faridpur and Mymensing. The Presidents of all these meetings were Mahomedan gentlemen of light and leading, most of whom I now see on the platform. My friend, Khan Bahadur Moulvi Mahomed Yusuf presided over the Calcutta meeting. Our friend, Nawab, Athikulla presided over the Dacca meeting. I know there were some pro-Partition meetings. But they were the work of one man, Nawab Salimulla, aided by his Anglo-Indian friends, official and non-official. (cries of shame"). It is a great shame. That officials should support the pro-Partition agitation is a scandal of the gravest magnitude. The official support of public movements deprives them of all their significance. This fact was brought to the notice of Mr. Morley. And I hope that, the Government of the new Province has taken some action in this matter. I won't be long, I will finish in ten minutes.

Gentlemen, the volume of popular opinion is rising day by day. The enthronement of popular opinion is only question



of time. 25 years ago, Lord Ripon said from his place as Chancellor of the University of Calcutta that time was fast approaching, when public opinion, even in India, was becoming the irresistible master of Government. There are those who would give the world to bring about the indefinite postponement of this blessed consummation and to see that they set Hindus against Mahomedans and Mahomedans against Hindus (cries of 'shame'). We ought to be on our guard against the machinations of the intriguers who are the enemies of Hindus and Mahomedans alike. The number of Mahomedans present at this meeting is not, as you said the other day, a hundred but the number is more than two hundred. You will be pleased to hear that we have hundred Mahomedan volunteers out of three hundreds. (cries of *Bande Mataram*). Speaking for myself as a member of the Hindu community, I desire to tell my Mahomedan fellow-countrymen that we notice with satisfaction the political ferment which we witness in the great Islamic community in India. We rejoice at the growing aspirations of the Mahomedan community. From us Hindus, you will receive nothing but sympathy and co-operation, for, we recognise that you are brothers linked to us by an inseparable destiny. Hindus and Mahomedans, let us stand on a common platform—may it not be the platform of this Congress,—sanctified by public effort and devotion of our great men, may we Hindus and Mahomedans stand shoulder to shoulder on this sacred spot, this gathering of the people and nations of India, and by mutual effort, it may be by mutual forbearance and mutual charity, work out the great destinies that the God of nations has placed before us (cheers)!

Sir, I know not what the fate of this agitation will be. For the present, the signs are all against us. The future is enveloped in the deepest darkness and not the faintest streak of hope illumines the darkness of the situation. The heart of the stoutest many even quail, as he views the prospect before him. For eighteen long months have we carried on this agitation. Oh,

God, for how much longer will it be our painful and laborious task to continue it ! From the depths of our heart cries out a voice, "Oh, continue it, so long as the wrong is not righted (cheers). Let the banner, which has been uplifted, float high in the breeze, the emblem of your Hope and Triumph, until success is yours ; and if, perchance, the banner should drop from your sinking hands, the God of nations will raise up others in your places, who will carry it aloft, and aided by the irresistible forces of time, which make for justice and progress, they will carry it to an assured, if not, a speedy triumph." That is the voice that cries out from the innermost depths of our hearts and we bow to it.

Brother delegates, with us the partition is what the Home Rule is with the Irish. For 100 years, the Irish have fought for the Home Rule ; for 100 years they have met with defeat and disappointment. For 100 years, they have again and again come back to the charge. We mean to imitate the Irish along those constitutional lines, which will win for us the sympathy and support of civilised mankind, never yielding, but never despairing, possessing our souls in patience, with the firm confidence, that, as in the physical, so in the moral world, the darkest night is often but the precursor of the brightest day and holds concealed in its bosom the germs of those golden streaks which proclaim the advent of a new dawn.

Brother delegates, I have now one appeal to make to you. We want your help and your sympathy in this great struggle. Will it be extended to us ? Say, yes or no. (The whole house shouted "yes" vociferously). I thank you for this demonstration of sympathy and I beg of you, when you go back to your homes, to record in your provincial meetings and your provincial associations, resolutions of protest against the cruel wrong which has been done to the people of Bengal. Let the Government know that when one province is injured, all the other provinces share the woe and the grief (cheers). The moral significance of such a demonstration, it would be impossible to exaggerate. It will con-

stitute a bulwark of strength in our national struggle. It will invest the public opinion of a province with the potency of the national voice of all India. It will intensify the solidarity between province and province by making them the participators in their mutual sorrows and anxieties ; and therefore, Brother delegates, with all confidence do I appeal to you, to stand by us in this, the greatest struggle, in which we are engaged, since we have come under British Rule ; and to such an appeal made by afflicted Bengal to United India, there can be but one reply and it will be a reply which will voice forth the predominating sentiment of this great gathering, viz., that we are all brothers moved by mutual grievances, cemented by mutual hopes, animated by mutual aspirations and linked together by a common destiny, and that as brothers, we are resolved to fight for each other's rights and stand by one another in the hour of our darkest misfortune. *Bande Mataram* ! (shouts of *Bande Mataram*).

## BENGAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

### CALCUTTA MUNICIPAL BILL, PART I.

*19th March, 1898.*

The Hon'ble BABU SURENDRANATH BANERJEA said :—  
 "SIR,—My first duty is to congratulate the Hon'ble Member in charge of the Bill on the lucid and exhaustive statement with which he has prefaced his introduction of the Bill. Greatly as I differ from him with regard to his views about the Bill, and strongly as I condemn the measure, I am bound to recognize the tact, judgment and ability, and above all the conciliatory attitude, which are so conspicuous throughout the speech. My hon'ble friend rests his case not so much upon the failure of the Commissioners as upon the alleged inherent weakness of the system under

which they had to work. It is the system rather than the men that he attacks. I commend this part of his speech. He has thus endeavoured, so far as it lay in his power, to clear the atmosphere and relieve the controversy of those personal elements which at one time threatened to darken the issues involved ; for I can conceive no greater misfortune than that we should in approaching this grave consideration allow our minds to be perverted—our judgments to be warped—by any sentiment of personal or party bias or by any lingering recollection of a controversy which I hope and trust has now been forgotten. We should endeavour, in considering this question, to rise the height of judicial impartiality and level-headedness, for the issues involved are of grave and far-reaching importance. If this Bill should unhappily become the law of the land, and if its principles are to be engrafted upon the system of Local Self-Government which prevails in the Mufasil, then I have no hesitation in saying—I say it with regret, but say it I must—that one of the greatest blessings which we enjoy under British Rule, and with the inauguration of which, Sir, your name is so honourably associated—the inestimable boon of Local Self-Government—will have become a thing of the past.

Well, Sir, if I have rightly understood the attitude of my friend—and it is an attitude which challenges the system rather than the men—then the question which we have to ask ourselves is this—what are the grounds upon which he bases his conclusions ? My hon'ble friend says in substance that the municipal system of Calcutta has been tried and has been found wanting, that the conservancy arrangements have broken down, that the constitution does not ensure prompt and continuous executive action, and that it is unequal to the strain of a grave and sudden emergency. This represents the sum and substance of his indictment against the Corporation. Great as is the authority which undoubtedly belongs to my hon'ble friend as the

Head of the municipal administration of these Provinces, I think we shall be guilty of no disrespect towards him, if we ask him to produce his evidence and to place before us the materials upon which he has based his opinion and upon the strength of which he invites this Council to endorse his judgment. Sir, if we examine the matter a little closely, we shall find that my hon'ble friend has undertaken a task beset with serious difficulties. It will not be enough for him to show that in regard to the municipal administration of Calcutta there has been a failure here—a defect there—a break-down elsewhere. He must carry his evidence much further than that. He must show that the system has so completely failed—the situation is so desperate—that no partial remedy will suffice—that there must be a radical and fundamental change—that the system must be broken up, the site cleared for the erection of a new and a totally different superstructure. Nay more—he must advance a stage yet further. My hon'ble friend must show that in the actual circumstances of Calcutta, menaced by the plague, the only remedy that is left open to us as sensible and wise men is to adopt the discredited municipal system of Bombay which was not able to keep out the plague. A more desperate position—one more entirely at variance with the dictates of reason and sound sense—it would be difficult to conceive. My friend may well feel staggered, I will not say at the temerity of the enterprise, but at the gravity of the task which he has imposed upon himself, and if he is not able to do justice to it, his great ability will not be at fault—the badness of the cause will be responsible for it.

Sir, it is not for one moment to be supposed that I regard the present constitution of the Calcutta Municipality as perfect. Far from it. It is capable of improvement, but it does not lie in the directions indicated in the Bill. The Bill has been launched in the name of sanitation. Could we persuade ourselves to believe that it would promote sanitation

and thus confer an unmixed benefit upon the people, what could be more natural than that we should support a measure, so wise in its scope—so beneficent in its intentions. For Calcutta is the city of our birth—it is the city of our sires—it is the city of our children—and it is to be the destined city of our children's children. We have a far more permanent and abiding interest in its sanitary well-being than any other section of the community could possibly have. We would welcome any rational scheme of sanitation which would bring to our people an accession of health and all the blessings which the possession of health implies. But we are persuaded that this Bill will not promote this great object. It is not laws but funds that are needed for the structural improvement of Calcutta. We have had of recent years too many laws. We want rest, peace, the repose of peace, freedom from the excitement consequent upon new proposals for the enactment of new laws. It is money and not a change in the constitution of the Municipality that is required for the sanitation of Calcutta. Sir, I speak not as an amateur or a theorist, but as one who has some practical familiarity with municipal work. I have spent the best part of my life-time in the service of the Corporation. I entered it when young. I have grown grey in its service. The work of the Corporation has been the pleasure and the pride of my life. I have behind me an experience of nearly 25 years. Fortified by that experience, I venture to make an earnest appeal to you, Sir, whose name is so honourably associated with the great scheme of Local Self-Government, to abandon or at any rate largely to modify a measure which has filled the rate-payers of Calcutta with alarm, which will not promote the ends of sanitation, which will depreciate the value of property, disorganize the work of the Corporation and wreck the best prospects of Local Self-Government in the capital of the Indian Empire.

Sir, I might put my case upon still higher considerations. Municipal institutions, said Mr. Gladstone, are the seed-

plots upon which and around which are developed that political capacity and those habits of political thought which ought to be the supreme concern of all Governments to foster and to promote. Our municipal institutions are the gift of our rulers. We owe them to their beneficence. But they have taken firm root in our hearts and our convictions; for they are in entire accord with our ancient traditions and the inherited instincts of our race, fostered by the *panchayat* system and our time-honoured village organisations. We cherish them with reverence. The love and devotion of a people cling to them. They supplement our education; for what nobler school could there be than the school of public affairs! These noble seminaries inspire the people with a sense of responsibility, exercise a moderating influence upon their minds, and enlist their sympathies on behalf of the Government. It would be most unwise, most unstatesmanlike, in these days of political unrest and excitement, to do aught which would in the least impair the utility of these institutions or shake public confidence in them. We are the friends of sanitation; but the worship of sanitation may be carried to the verge of idolatry. We agree with Sir Ashley Eden in thinking that a single case where native society is persuaded by conviction to adopt a sanitary reform is worth hundred cases where such reform is forced upon it by the pressure of external circumstances. Sir, greatly as we value sanitation, we are not prepared to sacrifice our civic freedom for its sake, especially when such a sacrifice is unnecessary and uncalled for, and when it will prove disastrous to the fortunes of our people in other higher and nobler directions.

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## CALCUTTA MUNICIPAL BILL, PART II.

*27th September, 1899.*

The Hon'ble BABU SURENDRANATH BANERJEA said :—  
 Just as I was coming to this Council this morning, I received a letter which reminded me that to-day was the anniversary of the death of Raja Ram Mohan Roy. It seems to me to be most fitting that the anniversary of the death of the greatest Bengali of modern times should correspond with the date which will be remembered by the future historian of Bengal as the date which marks the extinction of local self-government in that city where he lived and worked and which was the city of his love.

Sir, I do not remember any project of law which within the lifetime of this generation has created a graver sense of uneasiness, or one which has more profoundly stirred the hearts of the people. It has evoked the most persistent agitation since its introduction into this Council—an agitation which for its earnestness, the depth of feeling which underlies it, and the visible alarm which it embodies, is unparalleled in the annals of this city. It will not do to seek to belittle the intensity of these demonstrations. It will not do to say that this agitation is the work of wire-pullers. Where would the wire-pullers be if there was not a substratum of feeling upon which they might work? And, Sir, am I to understand that you are to set down as wire-pullers men like Raja Benoy Krishna Deb Bahadur, Kumar Radha Prasad Roy Bahadur, Kumar Monindra Chunder Mullick Bahadur, Babu Jotirindranath Tagore and others, the illustrious and princely houses? If they have been driven into the ranks of the agitators, the Bill is responsible for it. It is bad measures that make men agitators. It is good measures that rob them of their work. It will not do, I say so deliberately, to belittle the agitation which has been set on foot against this Bill. It represents all the culture, all the talent, all the wealth of this great city. It represents all



that is highest and best and noblest in the municipal and the public life of Calcutta. Men who have never stirred out of their homes to attend a public meeting, men who have never uttered the whisper of a complaint against any measure of the Government of this country, men who have hitherto lived in the quiet and contented possession of their wealth and in the enjoyment of all that wealth implies, have felt themselves constrained under a sense of overwhelming duty to record their deliberate protest against this measure. Mark the opposition of my friend Raja Ranajit Sinha Bahadur, of Nashipur, a most peace-loving, loyal and law-abiding man, and yet, as the representative of the landholding interest in Bengal, speaking with the weight of that interest behind him, he feels it his duty to record publicly and emphatically his deliberate protest against this Bill.

My friend the Hon'ble Mr. Oldham, in the course of the observations which he addressed to us, was pleased to say that this protest is the work of the Brahmins and the lesser Brahmins. No, Sir ! This protest emanates from the voice of a united community. It is repeated in every Indian newspaper, it is reproduced in every vernacular journal, it is the talk of every bazaar in the Indian part of the town, it is the staple of conversation in every Indian home, and it has at last been reproduced on the Indian stage. The volume of opinion grows day by day until it bids fair to become the common opinion of a united community. I desire to remind my hon'ble friend, who is so anxious to belittle the intensity of public feeling with regard to this matter, of an expression of opinion which comes from an authority which my friend is bound to respect—an authority which is held in the highest respect by this Council—the authority of no less a man than John Stuart Mill. In his Essay on Representative Government, John Stuart Mill says 'The opinions and sentiments of the educated classes are sure to filter downwards and become in the course of time the opinions and sentiments of the

uneducated masses.' Let us not, therefore, lay the flattering unction to our souls that this protest comes from a few interested people and their still fewer followers, and that, behind the din and noise which they have created, the great Indian community of Calcutta repose in the silence of peace and tranquillity.

And here I have a matter of complaint, and when I make it I desire in the most explicit terms to eliminate your respected personality from that complaint. The complaint I have to make is as to the way the representations of my countrymen have been treated. The most painful feature in this most painful controversy is the total disregard shown for the Hindu opinion of this city. I repeat the question—how have you treated these representations, the memorials and petitions which were addressed to this Government not by dozens but by scores and hundreds? How have you treated these representations? With the exception of a memorial that was addressed to the Government of India, not even the courtesy of a reply was vouchsafed to any of them. My hon'ble friend will reply—and I can almost anticipate what he will say—that these representations were placed before the Select Committee and carefully considered by that Committee. I do not wish to question that statement in the smallest degree. No doubt they were carefully considered, and they were as carefully rejected. So far as the constitutional clauses of the Bill were concerned, these representations might not as well have been made. I ask then—where was the necessity for inviting the Indian public bodies to express their opinion with regard to those features of the Bill, the constitutional clauses especially, in connection with which the conclusions of the Government were foregone conclusions? Where was the necessity of enacting the solemn farce of inviting public opinion when anything that public opinion might say was not likely to make the least impression upon the mind of the Government? How different, Sir,—and I deplore the

fact,—was the state of things in 1876 from the state of things now ! How much more deferential the Government in those days was to the expression of public opinion—what greater latitude, wider scope and independence of action was permitted to official members ? Read the proceedings of this Council in connection with the Calcutta Municipal Bill of 1876, and you will find that the official members frequently voted on opposite sides, the Lieutenant-Governor on one or two occasions being in the minority. All that is now changed, and the result is that our amendments were massacred in the most ruthless manner.

My hon'ble friend expressed his surprise that we should have our amendments chiefly to the constitutional clauses of the Bill, and that we should have thought it necessary to address ourselves more vigorously to the substantial part of the measure. There was a very good reason for that. Great concessions were made by my hon'ble friend in the Select Committee in respect of what he calls the substantial part of the Bill. The building regulations, as I said the other day, were completely recast, and my hon'ble friend Mr. Buckley, who has all the instincts of an administrator, expressed to me, if I may be permitted to betray the secrets of his prison-house, his surprise that such proposals should ever have been thought of as were embodied in the original Bill in regard to the building regulations. Therefore, Sir, so far as the substantial part of the Bill was concerned, important concessions have been made. Very little changes had to be proposed in that connection, but as regards the constitutional clauses my friend was inexorable ; he would not move an inch ; manfully or unmanfully he stuck to his guns—he would not make any concession, except the one to which I had occasion to refer ; and therefore in the discharge of that duty, which is imposed upon us by the mandate of our consciences and the mandate of our constituents, we felt it incumbent upon us to address our amendments chiefly to the constitutional provisions of the Bill. And, Sir, it was the highest duty imposed upon us

as the citizens of this great metropolitan town that we should challenge with all the emphasis that we could command these revolutionary provisions in the Bill, the effect of which was to destroy the germs of local self-government in the capital of the Indian Empire. Your Government, Sir, was bent upon committing a grave mistake, and we as loyal citizens felt it our duty to prevent the commission of the mistake. Therefore it was that we directed our unremitting attention to those amendments which affected the constitutional part of the Bill. Our amendments as regards this part of the Bill were for the most part rejected, and our arguments did not produce the least impression. Was that due to the badness of the cause, or was it due to the inaptitude of the advocate? I can at least recall to mind one or two occasions in which it was due to neither of these causes. I will take a concrete case. In April, 1898, this Council by a unanimous vote affirmed the principle that there were to be 75 Commissioners on the Corporation, and that two-thirds of the Commissioners were to be elected. In August, 1899, the Council reversed its judgment in this respect. My friend and myself argued, we protested, we entreated, we exhausted all the resources of argument in connection with this matter; but we made no impression. The Council was obdurate and our amendments were rejected. Arguments which held good in 1898 were considered to be bad and useless in 1899. The *personnel* of the Council being practically the same, what then, Sir, had happened in the meantime to bring about this change in the spirit of our dreams? It was the mandate of the Government of India, and here we have the secret of the explanation which accounts for the ruthless massacre of our amendments. Our amendments, based upon reason, were overborne by authority—it was reason pitted against authority—mandate against argument—and reason succumbed—authority prevailed. I think my hon'ble friend the Member in charge of the Bill will bear me out in that statement.

My friend has been good enough to say that ours is a subordinate Legislature. My friend the Member for the University has recorded a vigorous protest against the application of the expression, so far as it concerns the non-official Members of this Council. While my hon'ble friend says that we are a subordinate Legislature, a far higher authority than my hon'ble friend, the highest authority connected with the Government of India, the Secretary of State himself, from his place in Parliament, has declared that the Bengal Council was a self-governing body. We are indeed not a self-governing body. We may protest, we may argue ; but we are overborne by the votes of the official majority. If we were a self-governing body, if we had been left to our own unaided impulses in this matter, to our own unfettered judgment and discretion, I am perfectly certain that the Bill would, so far as regards some of the most important features of the constitutional clauses, have borne a very different aspect altogether, and the community would have been spared the disappointment which they feel owing to the modification of the Bill in accordance with the mandate of the Government of India.

And here, Sir, if I may do so without disrespect, I may add that the sense of disappointment has been accentuated by the ruling of Your Honour which shut out some amendments bearing upon the constitutional clauses of the Bill, on the ground that they traversed principles which had already been accepted by the Council. I most respectfully ventured to point out at the time that the ruling was altogether new and unprecedented, and that it was unfortunate as being applicable to a case which had excited the keenest controversy. I am bound to say, Sir, from my place as a responsible Member of this Council, that Your Honour's ruling in this connection has intensified public dissatisfaction.

And here, too, I may advert for a moment to our daily sittings which happily are going to close to-day. Here we have been summoned and we have met from day to day for a period of more than a fortnight, and have sat some-

times from 11 in the morning to 5 o'clock in the afternoon in connection with a matter of the gravest magnitude and importance. Sir, where was the necessity, may I be permitted to ask, for all this worry and hurry? The affairs of Calcutta have been managed in the past without a measure of this kind, and those affairs might have been managed in the future, at any rate for a year or two, without a measure of this kind. I desire to point out that high-pressure legislation is often conducive to inefficient legislation, and that what is done in haste may have to be undone at leisure.

And, Sir, I cannot help remarking in this connection that the circumstances of the Bill are altogether of a most extraordinary character. The Bill is of portentous size, extending over 650 sections; it was introduced into this Council amid the stifling heat of an April month, when people are more fit to be in bed than attend to public business, and it is being considered amid the dog-days of September, after having been threshed out by a Committee upon which is entailed severer labour than any Committee has ever undergone in connection with any measure of this Council; and now, Sir, it emerges from this Council in a shape and form which makes it, I venture to add, one of the least acceptable measures which this generation has witnessed. My friend has been good enough to tell us that this Bill is a better Bill than the Bill as revised by the Select Committee. I listened with astonishment, bordering upon bewilderment to a statement such as that. This Bill—a better Bill than the one as originally revised by the Select Committee! Why, Sir, if I may be permitted to introduce this Council into a little secret I will say this—that it is the character of this Bill, the determined attitude of Government in regard to it, the hopelessness of obtaining any modification, and the natural desire to be spared the necessity of witnessing the closing scenes connected with the extinction of a cherished institution—it is these circumstances rather than any personal considerations or personal motives which deter-

mined the action of the 28 Commissioners who resigned ; and I am proud to say that I was one of them. The Bill is distinctly worse, less acceptable, more retrograde and reactionary than the Bill as revised by the Select Committee, and I go a step further and say—than the Bill as originally introduced into this Council.













